

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 8509

To establish a National Advisory Council on Unpaid Meal Debt in Child Nutrition Programs, and for other purposes.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 26, 2022

Ms. OMAR introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

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## A BILL

To establish a National Advisory Council on Unpaid Meal Debt in Child Nutrition Programs, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “National Advisory  
5       Council on Unpaid Meal Debt Act of 2022”.

6       **SEC. 2. NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON UNPAID MEAL**  
7       **DEBT IN CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS.**

8       (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established a Na-  
9       tional Advisory Council on Unpaid Meal Debt in Child Nu-

1 trition Programs (in this section referred to as the “Council”).  
2

3 (b) DUTIES.—The Council shall provide recommendations, in accordance with subsection (g), to the  
4 Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service with respect to addressing unpaid school meal fees by ensuring  
5  
6 that—  
7

8 (1) students are not stigmatized; and

9 (2) school food authorities can maintain fiscal  
10 solvency in order to ensure the long-term viability of  
11 school meal programs.

12 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—

13 (1) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Council  
14 shall be composed of 14 members appointed by the  
15 Secretary as follows:

16 (A) 2 members shall be school nutrition  
17 State agency directors who are employed in different  
18 States;

19 (B) 2 members shall be school food service  
20 directors of a school meal program in an urban  
21 area who are employed in different States;

22 (C) 2 members shall be school food service  
23 directors of a school meal program in a rural  
24 area who are employed in different States;

1 (D) 2 members shall be officials of the  
2 Food and Nutrition Service office of the De-  
3 partment of Agriculture;

4 (E) 2 members shall be parents or guard-  
5 ians (who are not related to one another or to  
6 the same child) of children who are eligible for  
7 free and reduced price school meals;

8 (F) 2 members shall represent organiza-  
9 tions with expertise in the school meal pro-  
10 grams; and

11 (G) 2 members shall be food service profes-  
12 sionals who—

13 (i) work in school cafeterias; and

14 (ii) maintain daily contact with stu-  
15 dents, including by preparing or serving  
16 meals or working at registers.

17 (2) TERMS.—

18 (A) IN GENERAL.—Each member shall be  
19 appointed for the life of the Council.

20 (B) VACANCIES.—Any member appointed  
21 to fill a vacancy occurring before the expiration  
22 of the life of the Council shall be appointed for  
23 the remainder of the life of the Council.

24 (d) COMPENSATION.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—Members shall serve without  
2     pay.

3           (2) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member shall  
4     receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of  
5     subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions  
6     under subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United  
7     States Code.

8           (3) PARENTS OR GUARDIANS.—In the case of a  
9     member who is a parent or guardian appointed  
10    under subsection (c)(1)(E), such member, in addi-  
11    tion to reimbursement under paragraph (2), shall, at  
12    the discretion of the Secretary, be compensated in  
13    advance for other personal expenses related to par-  
14    ticipation on the Council, including child care ex-  
15    penses and lost wages during scheduled Council  
16    meetings.

17          (4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—  
18    There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
19    this subsection \$1,500,000, to remain available  
20    through the date described in subsection (h).

21    (e) CHAIRPERSON; VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

22          (1) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for election to  
23    Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the Council, an  
24    individual must be a member of the Council de-  
25    scribed in subsection (c)(1).

1           (2) ELECTION.—The Chairperson and Vice  
2           Chairperson of the Council shall be elected by such  
3           members.

4           (f) MEETINGS.—

5           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall meet not  
6           fewer than 2 times per year at the call of the Chair-  
7           person.

8           (2) QUORUM.—5 members of the Council shall  
9           constitute a quorum.

10          (g) REPORT.—

11          (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after  
12          the establishment of the Council under subsection  
13          (a), the Council shall submit to the Administrator of  
14          the Food and Nutrition Service a report containing  
15          the recommendations described in subsection (b).

16          (2) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 1 year after  
17          the submission of the report under paragraph (1),  
18          the Secretary, acting through the Administrator of  
19          the Food and Nutrition Service, shall use the rec-  
20          ommendations contained in such report to issue  
21          guidance with respect to addressing unpaid school  
22          meal fees.

23          (h) TERMINATION.—The Council shall terminate on  
24          the date that is 1 day after the submission of the report  
25          required under subsection (g).

1       (i) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall  
2 provide the Council with such technical and other assist-  
3 ance, including secretarial and clerical assistance, as may  
4 be required to carry out its functions.

5       (j) UNPAID SCHOOL MEAL FEES DEFINED.—In this  
6 section, the term “unpaid school meal fees” means out-  
7 standing fees owed by a household to a local educational  
8 agency for lunches under this Act or breakfasts under sec-  
9 tion 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C.  
10 1773).

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