



## PRESS RELEASE

For more information contact Nancy Conley, Communications Director, 501.399.9999, [nconley@arhungeralliance.org](mailto:nconley@arhungeralliance.org)

### Congress Takes Major Action on Summer Meals

*“There is no more impactful way to end summer hunger for America’s kids.”*

**LITTLE ROCK, AR** (August 5, 2015)—Today, Arkansas’s U.S. Senator John Boozman, co-chairman of the Senate Hunger Caucus, introduced the new Hunger Free Summer for Kids Act,” a bill which could help end summer hunger for millions of children nationwide.

"Eliminating hunger and malnourishment must be a national priority. We need to provide consistency in the summer for Arkansas children who rely on the regular meals provided at school. Unfortunately, the summer meals program has a one-size-fits-all approach that does not work well for every community. Urban, suburban and rural areas face different challenges, and this legislation provides states with the flexibility to choose the approach that makes the most sense for their communities. I am committed to creating opportunities for children to access healthy, nutritious meals when class is not in session," said Boozman.

The Hunger Free Summer for Kids Act would give states more flexibility in how they reach hungry children with the food they need when school is out of session. Once implemented, this legislation could give as many as 6.5 million kids the chance to get the food they need during the summer months.

The bill would make it easier for states to reach low-income children in hard-to-reach places, such as rural communities or areas currently ineligible to host summer sites. For example, when accessing a summer meal site is difficult or impossible for children, it would provide the option to deliver meals or allow children to consume the meal later off site. In other circumstances, states would have the option to provide low-income families with a grocery store credit during the summer months to purchase nutritious foods, a model that has been proven to reduce the most severe forms of childhood hunger by up to one-third.

“This is a critical moment,” says Billy Shore, founder and CEO of Share Our Strength. “These policy improvements are fundamental to ending childhood hunger in America and ensuring that our children are fit, fed, and ready to learn when school resumes.”

"The Hunger Free Summer for Kids Act will have a significant impact on our work to end summer hunger in Arkansas, and we are grateful to Senator Boozman for his leadership. This legislation gives our state the options we need to overcome barriers and feed kids more effectively and more efficiently, no matter where they live. When our children get the nutrition they need, they feel better, learn more and grow up stronger. And that means a stronger, more productive Arkansas," said Kathy Webb, executive director of Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance.

Summer is the hungriest time of year for many children from low-income families. Losing access to school meals for their kids puts added strain on already-tight budgets, and families are left making tough trade-offs. According to research, two-thirds of all low-income families say they've had to choose between food and utilities, two-thirds also had to choose between food and medical care.

The national summer meals program was created 40 years ago to help students get enough nutrition when school is out of session. When the program works well, it's a lifeline. Today, however, the program just doesn't reach a majority of kids in need; of the 22 million kids who receive a free or reduced-price school lunch, only 4 million are getting a summer meal.

"This legislation's impact will be felt across the nation," says Shore. "Ending summer hunger for this many children would have a massive impact on issues like avoidable healthcare costs, graduation rates and future economic competitiveness."

Learn More

- Click here to learn about the [Summer Meals Program in Arkansas](#) and how you can be involved.
- Click here to [read more about the specific policies](#) in this bill.

###

#### About The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 480 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit [www.ARhungeralliance.org](http://www.ARhungeralliance.org) for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

#### About NO KID HUNGRY

No child should go hungry in America, but 1 in 5 kids will face hunger this year. Using proven, practical solutions, No Kid Hungry is ending childhood hunger today by ensuring that kids in need get the healthy food they need. When we all work together, we can make sure kids get the healthy food they need. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of national anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength. Join us at [NoKidHungry.org](http://NoKidHungry.org).