

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6430

To require that school food authorities and local educational agencies not collect unpaid meal fees during the COVID–19 pandemic, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 3, 2020

Ms. OMAR (for herself, Ms. HAALAND, Ms. MOORE, Mrs. NAPOLITANO, Mr. MCGOVERN, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Mrs. HAYES, Ms. SCHAKOWSKY, Mr. NADLER, Mr. VARGAS, Ms. NORTON, Ms. WILSON of Florida, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Mr. LEVIN of Michigan, Mr. POCAN, Ms. TLAIB, Mr. LOWENTHAL, Mr. SOTO, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. PRESSLEY, Ms. PINGREE, Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi, Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. JOHNSON of Georgia, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, Ms. SÁNCHEZ, Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois, and Ms. MCCOLLUM) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To require that school food authorities and local educational agencies not collect unpaid meal fees during the COVID–19 pandemic, 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 “Suspend School Meal
5 Debt Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. SCHOOL MEAL DEBT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

2 (a) CANCELLATION OF MEAL DEBTS OWED AS OF
3 DATE OF ENACTMENT.—The Secretary shall reimburse
4 each school food authority and local educational agency
5 participating in the school lunch program under the Rich-
6 ard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C.
7 1751 et seq.) or the school breakfast program under sec-
8 tion 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C.
9 1773) for the unpaid meal fees owed to such authority
10 or agency as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

11 (b) DEBT COLLECTION PROHIBITION DURING EMER-
12 GENCY PERIOD.—Notwithstanding any other provision of
13 law, the Secretary shall require that during the emergency
14 period each school food authority and local educational
15 agency described in subsection (a) may not collect unpaid
16 meal fees or use a debt collector (as such term is defined
17 in section 803 of the Consumer Credit Protection Act (15
18 U.S.C. 1692a)) to collect such unpaid meal fees.

19 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

20 (1) EMERGENCY PERIOD.—The term “emer-
21 gency period” means the period—

22 (A) beginning on the date of the enactment
23 of this section; and

24 (B) ending 30 days after the date on which
25 the public health emergency declared by the
26 Secretary of Health and Human Services under

1 section 319 of the Public Health Service Act
2 (42 U.S.C. 247d) with respect to COVID–19 is
3 terminated under such section.

4 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
5 the Secretary of Agriculture.

6 (3) UNPAID MEAL FEES.—The term “unpaid
7 meal fees”—

8 (A) means outstanding fees owed by a
9 household to a local educational agency or
10 school food authority for lunches under the
11 Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act
12 (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) or breakfasts under
13 section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966
14 (42 U.S.C. 1773); and

15 (B) includes late fees associated with the
16 outstanding fees described in subparagraph (A).

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