

**Testimony in Support of SN 769**

**Primary and Secondary Education- Community Eligibility Provision-  
Hunger Free School Meals**

**Senate Budget and Taxation and Education, Energy and the Environment**

**February 25, 2025**

Greetings Senator Guzzone and Budget and Taxation Committee Members

My Name is Elizabeth Leach and I am Director of Food & Nutrition Services for Montgomery County Public Schools. This testimony is provided in my personal capacity and not on behalf of the school system.

I am writing to express my strong support for SB 769.

The purpose of this Bill is to provide state funding to cover the cost equal to the difference between the federal paid reimbursement rate and the federal free reimbursement rate for individual school, groups of schools, and school districts implementing the Community Eligibility Provision in eligible schools.

The program is needed for many reasons but the one closest to the school system's mission is support for the student's education.

We found that when the federal government paid for us to feed all students both breakfast and lunch at no cost to them, many good things happened in the school environment such as a significant reduction in discipline referrals, better attendance, less tardiness, more ability to focus on and participate in classes, improved test scores and improved diet quality.

Thank You for the opportunity to testify in writing and express strong support for SB 769.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Elizabeth Leach".

Elizabeth Leach, MPH