

Legislation Text

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Urging the U.S. Department of Agriculture to maintain and properly fund the Universal Feeding Program in the School District of Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, According to an October 22nd article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, it was reported that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (“USDA”) is terminating the School District of Philadelphia’s Universal Feeding Program as of 2010; and

WHEREAS, Based on an idea proposed by Community Legal Services General Counsel Jonathan Stein, the Universal Feeding Program has, for 17 years, enabled tens of thousands of Philadelphia school children to receive free or reduced-price school meals by eliminating the stigma, cost, and bureaucracy of completing forms when approximately 75% of City schools have high enrollment of low-income children that qualify for assistance; and

WHEREAS, With the elimination of the Universal Feeding Program, the USDA wants the School District to revert back to a process where each child submits an application for a free or reduced price meal; however, this process would negatively affect about 121,000 students, cost the School District millions of dollars, and take away the only nutritious food that some children eat in a day; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Senators Arlen Specter and Bob Casey, U.S. Representatives Chaka Fattah and Allyson Schwartz, and Mayor Nutter held at press conference on October 27th to condemn the actions of the USDA in eliminating the Universal Feeding Program and pledged to fight to keep the program; and

WHEREAS, The Universal Feeding Program has become a national model in which New York and Los Angeles desire to adopt this program and in April, U.S. Senator Tom Harkin suggested to the USDA that the program be expanded to other cities around the country; and

WHEREAS, The USDA decided to terminate the Universal Feeding Program after a push for expansion to other cities; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That we hereby urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture to maintain and properly fund the Universal Feeding Program in the School District of Philadelphia.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That we support the efforts of U.S. Senators Arlen Specter and Bob Casey, U.S. Representatives Chaka Fattah and Allyson Schwartz, and Mayor Nutter to keep the Universal Feeding Program open and available for Philadelphia school children.

RESOLVED FURTHER, That an Engrossed copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Philadelphia delegation to the U.S. Congress.