

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 69

Introduced by Assembly Member Brownley
(Coauthor: Senator Scott)

July 1, 2008

Assembly Joint Resolution No. 69—Relative to child nutrition programs.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 69, as introduced, Brownley. Child nutrition programs.

This bill would memorialize that the Legislature supports reauthorization of federal child nutrition programs and that the Legislature urges the President and the Congress of the United States to ensure reimbursement rates for reduced-price meals are adequate to fully fund the cost of producing a nutritious school meal relative to the cost of living in a region.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The National School Lunch Program is declared
2 to be the policy of Congress, “as a measure of national security,
3 to safeguard the health and well-being of the nation’s children and
4 to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural
5 commodities and other food, by assisting the states, through
6 grants-in-aid and other means, in providing an adequate supply of
7 food and other facilities for the establishment, maintenance,
8 operation, and expansion of nonprofit school lunch programs”;
9 and

1 WHEREAS, Federal regulations further state that participating
2 schools shall ensure that children gain a full understanding of the
3 relationship between proper eating and good health; and

4 WHEREAS, Child nutrition programs are responsible for
5 collaborating with the school community to implement
6 comprehensive nutrition and wellness policies in school districts;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, All of California's more than 6 million pupils
9 deserve access to high-quality, safe, nutritious meals available in
10 the school setting, recognizing the link between adequate
11 nourishment and educational performance; and

12 WHEREAS, Children that experience hunger have been shown
13 to be more likely to have lower math scores, decreased
14 attentiveness, increased likelihood of repeating a grade, increased
15 absences and tardiness, and more referrals to special education
16 services; and

17 WHEREAS, Child nutrition programs in California provide
18 over 4 million meals to school children daily, and must comply
19 with complex state and federal requirements, provide adequate
20 food preparation and dining facilities, and meet budget
21 requirements despite rapidly escalating food, energy, transportation,
22 labor, and other costs; and

23 WHEREAS, Losses in the school meal programs must be offset
24 by other revenue sources that would otherwise support classroom
25 instruction; and

26 WHEREAS, For each lunch provided to a child who qualifies
27 for a free meal, the estimated average cost of producing the lunch
28 is \$3.10; the reimbursement received for each meal, provided that
29 all state and federal requirements are met, is \$2.6895 (a federal
30 reimbursement of \$2.47 and a state reimbursement of \$0.2195);
31 and

32 WHEREAS, The difference between reimbursement and cost
33 undermines the ability to continue to provide nutritious meals to
34 all pupils; and

35 WHEREAS, The United States Department of Agriculture
36 recognizes higher cost as a factor in determining reimbursement
37 rates by allowing a higher federal reimbursement rate in Alaska
38 and Hawaii; and

39 WHEREAS, Many families that qualify for reduced-price meals,
40 prescribed by federal law using the federal poverty level, find it

1 difficult to pay the reduced fee, and the fee for a paid meal is an
2 insurmountable barrier to participation for an increasing number
3 of families in California; and

4 WHEREAS, The eligibility scale to qualify pupils for free or
5 reduced-price meals is the same scale throughout the country and
6 does not consider regions with higher costs of living; and

7 WHEREAS, A self-sufficiency index, which identifies the
8 income levels at which families can meet their most basic needs
9 without public support, is available in all regions to apply to meal
10 eligibility standards; and

11 WHEREAS, A single-parent household with two children in
12 San Mateo County, California, needs \$67,867 to be self-sufficient,
13 while a similar family in Hardeman County, Tennessee, is
14 self-sufficient with only \$21,657; now, therefore, be it

15 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
16 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature supports reauthorization
17 of federal child nutrition programs and urges the President and the
18 Congress of the United States to ensure that reimbursement rates
19 are adequate to fully fund the cost of producing a nutritious school
20 meal relative to the cost of living in a region; and be it further

21 *Resolved,* That the eligibility scale used to qualify families for
22 free and reduced-price meals be adjusted according to the
23 self-sufficiency index for the region served; and be it further

24 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
25 of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
26 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the
27 Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
28 Representative from California in the Congress of the United
29 States.