

1 [Supporting the Universal School Meals Program Act of 2021]

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3 **Resolution supporting enactment of the Universal School Meals Program Act of 2021**  
4 **and urging San Francisco federal legislators to co-sponsor the bill.**

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6 WHEREAS, On May 7, 2021, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Congressional  
7 Representative Ilhan Omar (D-MN), along with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) and  
8 Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI) introduced the Universal School Meals Program Act of  
9 2021; and

10 WHEREAS, The Universal School Meals Program Act of 2021 would permanently  
11 provide free breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a snack to all school children regardless of income,  
12 eliminate school meal debt, and strengthen local economies by incentivizing local food  
13 procurement; and

14 WHEREAS, At introduction, the Universal School Meals Program Act of 2021 was  
15 cosponsored by nine US Senators, including Senator Alex Padilla of California; and 26  
16 members of Congress; and

17 WHEREAS, The bill has been endorsed by more than 360 organizations, including the  
18 School Nutrition Association, American Federation of Teachers, National Education  
19 Association, Service Employees International Union, Food Research and Action Center,  
20 Hunger Free America, UnidosUS, Children’s Defense Fund, and National Action Network; and

21 WHEREAS, The USDA estimates that nationwide, there are 12 million children in the  
22 United States who were food insecure in 2020; and

23 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Food Security Task Force has reported that, prior to  
24 the pandemic, one in four San Franciscans were at risk for food insecurity and one in ten  
25 Californians; and

1           WHEREAS, The San Francisco Food Security Task Force also has reported that, prior  
2 to the pandemic, Black and Latinx Californians experienced much higher rates of food  
3 insecurity, with 29% of those households food insecure; and

4           WHEREAS, Families with children experienced higher rates of food insecurity across  
5 all race and ethnic demographics, at a third or more of Black and Latinx households; and

6           WHEREAS, Hunger in children leads to potentially profound impacts on immediate and  
7 long-term physical and mental health, impaired development of language and motor skills,  
8 increased behavioral challenges, and decreased academic achievement; and

9           WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control emphasizes the connection between  
10 nutrition and school performance and reports that school meals result in healthier diets and  
11 significantly improved nutrition and leads to more stable attendance, lower detention and  
12 discipline rates, and higher academic scores; and

13           WHEREAS, Public schools began providing school lunches on an ad hoc basis in the  
14 early 20th century, in response to concerns about children being malnourished, and were  
15 supported philanthropically; and

16           WHEREAS, The first US law about school lunches was the National School Lunch Act  
17 of 1946 to provide federal subsidies to public schools to provide low-cost or free school  
18 lunches to qualified students; and

19           WHEREAS, In 1969, the Black Panthers broke new ground by creating the Free  
20 Breakfast for School Children Program in Oakland, which quickly spread to more than 35  
21 cities across the country; and over the next 11 years, served tens of thousands of children,  
22 planting the seeds for significant expansion of federal funding for school meals in the 1970s;  
23 and

24           WHEREAS, In 2011 the United States Department of Agriculture started a program  
25 called Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), which represented an initial step towards

1 Universal Meals by qualifying schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to  
2 all enrolled students without collecting individual household applications; instead, using a  
3 formula based on the percentage of students receiving other needs-based assistance to  
4 reimburse schools; and

5 WHEREAS, While SFUSD has maximized participation in Community  
6 Provision, eligibility depends on a concentration of poverty within individual schools, and only  
7 25 out of 136 SFUSD schools were able to participate pre-pandemic; and

8 WHEREAS, Across the country, nearly 30 million children in this country rely on free or  
9 reduced-price lunch and, in San Francisco, 53% of SFUSD's 52,000 K-12 students qualify for  
10 free or reduced priced meals; and

11 WHEREAS, During the COVID-19 pandemic, SFUSD shifted its on-site meals to Grab  
12 & Go Distribution and Door to Door Delivery and distributed over 7,000,000 breakfast, lunch,  
13 snacks and suppers; and

14 WHEREAS, In order to do this, SFUSD received waivers from the federal government  
15 which increased funding; and

16 WHEREAS, San Francisco seeks to counter hunger, especially in communities of  
17 color, by developing and supporting strategies that promote food sovereignty, including  
18 eliminating the shame and stigma that are barriers to people accessing the food they need;  
19 and

20 WHEREAS, San Francisco seeks to use a food sovereignty-focused approach to  
21 counter food insecurity that looks at the entire food system from production through  
22 distribution; the role of land, food production, and distribution in local, state, and national  
23 economies; environmental stewardship; and community leadership to ensure culturally  
24 appropriate food; and

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1           WHEREAS, The American Rescue Plan includes nutrition assistance for some children  
2 during the out-of-school summer months this year; and

3           WHEREAS, The US Department of Agriculture waivers during the pandemic have  
4 made free meals available to all SFUSD students, but only through June 2022; and

5           WHEREAS, The Universal School Meals Program Act would permanently provide food  
6 for all children throughout the school year regardless of income and removes stifling barriers  
7 such as stigma, applications, and paperwork, now; therefore, be it

8           RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco  
9 supports the enactment of the Universal School Meals Program Act of 2021; and

10          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San  
11 Francisco urges its local federal elected officials, including Speaker of the House Nancy  
12 Pelosi and Senator Dianne Feinstein, to add their names as co-sponsors of this urgently  
13 needed law; and

14          FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San  
15 Francisco directs the Clerk of the Board to send a copy of this Resolution to the federal  
16 representatives representing San Francisco.

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