



Press release for Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. For immediate release.

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## **BOOZMAN RECOGNIZES ALLIANCE IN FIGHT AGAINST CHILDHOOD HUNGER**

**LITTLE ROCK, AR ( January 21, 2016 )**—In an [address](#) before the Senate Agriculture Committee yesterday, Senator John Boozman (R-AR) recognized [Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance](#) and [Arkansas Foodbank](#) for helping shape his Hunger Free Summer for Kids Act that has now become part of the larger Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act of 2016. The new [act](#) will now go to the full Senate for a vote.

Kathy Webb, Alliance executive director, said “We applaud Senator Boozman for his leadership in bringing these and other much needed improvements to the child nutrition reauthorization legislation. These improvements will mean that more Arkansas children will have the nutritious meals they need to be healthy, engaged and ready to learn when school resumes.”

The Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act of 2016 contains the strongest improvements to the summer meals program in more than 40 years. Arkansas’s more than 280,000 children who qualify for free or reduced school meals are at special risk of food insecurity in the summer when school is out. Transportation is often a barrier for many in rural areas or where safety and weather concerns hinder children from traveling to congregate meal sites. Under the proposed Act, local communities will have greater flexibility in how meals are delivered to children, relaxing the existing requirement that children consume meals on site.

The Act also streamlines the application process required in order for sponsor organizations to seamlessly integrate their summer and afterschool meals programs to feed at risk children when school is not in session. The cumbersome application and reapplication processes are often a burden that results in organizations deciding to withdraw from the programs.

The [No Kid Hungry Center for Best Practices](#) found that families pay on average an additional \$300 in the summer when their children are not receiving school breakfast or lunch. To ease this burden on low-income families, the Improving Child Nutrition Integrity and Access Act of 2016 includes the summer EBT provision that will allow states to provide low-income families with a \$30 per child per month grocery credit during the summer months. A pilot program showed that such a program helps reduce the most severe forms of childhood hunger by up to one-third. In Arkansas, a state that leads the nation in poverty, this will be a tremendous help in getting children the nutritious food they need when school is out.

The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, our six Feeding America member food banks, [Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign](#) and [Share Our Strength](#), a national nonprofit dedicated to ending childhood hunger, are pleased to have had input into this much needed legislation.

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**About The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance**

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 480 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit [www.ARhungeralliance.org](http://www.ARhungeralliance.org) for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.