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SNA Commends Senate Passage of Child Nutrition Reauthorization; But Calls on House to Make Critical Changes to the Bill

NATIONAL HARBOR, MD (August 5, 2010) – The School Nutrition Association (SNA) commends the US Senate for advancing Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation prior to the body's August recess.

"The Senate, Agriculture Committee Chairman Blanche Lincoln and Senator Chambliss should be applauded for their tireless efforts to meet the nutritional needs of America's school children," said SNA President Nancy Rice, M.Ed., RD, LD, SNS, State Director of the Georgia Department of Education, School Nutrition Division. "The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act will expand access to healthy school meals and improve the nutritional quality of food sold throughout the school by giving the Secretary the authority to regulate food sold in vending machines."

SNA also called on the House of Representatives to make critical changes to the legislation before Congress completes its work on reauthorization.

"While school nutrition professionals commend the Senate's commitment to providing additional resources for healthy school meals, we have serious concerns about taking those funds from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which serves the families of children we support," said Rice. "In the effort to raise 'Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids' we don't want to risk compromising their dinner to improve their lunch. The School Nutrition Association calls on the House of Representatives to find a different offset for Child Nutrition Reauthorization."

SNA is also concerned about a provision in S. 3307 (Section 205) which would mandate schools to increase paid meal prices regardless of local circumstances.

"School nutrition professionals know from experience that significant price increases to school meals lead to significant drops in participation, impacting the quality of meals for all students," said Rice. "By mandating price hikes, Congress could inadvertently turn The National School Lunch Program from a successful education and nutrition program serving all children, into a means-tested, income security, welfare program, stigmatizing children who rely on school meals."

The School Nutrition Association hopes the House will take quick action in September to build on the Senate efforts to pass a strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization.