

Good afternoon. My name is Susan Grabowski. I live in Putney and serve as the School Nutrition Program Coordinator for the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union. I am also a member of the Hunger Free Vermont Board of Directors. My work centers on ensuring that children have consistent access to nourishing, developmentally appropriate meals so they are ready to learn and thrive.

I am here today to ask you to please appropriate \$182,000 in FY2027 as an incentive to CACFP Sponsor Organizations, to maximize federal funding available for food in Family Child Care Homes.

In my role, I see every day how critical stable nutrition is for children's cognitive development, emotional regulation, and ability to participate fully in school. That foundation begins long before kindergarten. When very young children in family child care settings have access to nutritious meals and snacks, it reduces stress on families, supports providers, and creates a more stable, nurturing learning environment. Early investment in nutrition pays dividends throughout a child's educational journey.

This appropriation will mean that more Family Child Care Home programs will be able to draw down federal funding to provide free meals and snacks to all children in their care. To be eligible for CACFP, a Family Child Care Home must have a sponsor organization that acts as a fiscal intermediary between the state agency and the provider. Providing this modest state investment ensures we maximize available federal dollars and strengthen the infrastructure that makes participation possible.

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Thank you for your time and for considering this request.