

**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL REVIEW FORM: 2013**

Bill Number: H.60 Name of Bill: An Act Relating to Providing State Financial Support for School Meals for Children of Low-income Households.

Agency/ Dept: AHS/DCF/ESD and AOE

Author of Bill Review: Patricia Duda, Director Food and Nutrition Programs

Date of Bill Review: 1/26/13

Status of Bill: (check one):

☒ Upon Introduction      ☐ As passed by 1<sup>st</sup> body      ☐ As passed by both bodies      ☐ Fiscal

Recommended Position:

☒ Support      ☐ Oppose      ☐ Remain Neutral      ☐ Support with modifications identified in #8 below

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**Analysis of Bill**

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**1. Summary of bill and issue it addresses.**

This bill addresses food insecurity, childhood hunger, the connection between poverty, the depth of poverty (the distance below the poverty line) and a child's likelihood to achieve developmental and academic measures. This bill meets a basic human need; provision of meals at school for children living in Vermont low income households, at no cost to the families of these children. This bill takes an important, meaningful step toward reducing the stress a child will feel when undernourished and or worrying about when and what their next meal will be.

**2. Is there a need for this bill?**

Yes. A very strong need for this bill.

Food Insecurity in Vermont (2009-2011, 3 year average from US Census): Food insecurity is defined as the lack of access to enough food to fully meet basic needs at all times due to lack of financial resources.

- 13% of all Vermont households are food insecure<sup>1</sup>
- 27,000 children under 18 live in food insecure households (22%)<sup>2</sup>

**3. What are likely to be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for this Department?**

No programmatic implications regarding 3 SQS administration.

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<sup>1</sup> "Household Food Security in the United States, 2011," [www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov). The food insecure households with hunger are a subset of the total food insecure households.

<sup>2</sup> Data on Vermont children living in food insecure homes from 2009-2011 Current Population Survey of the US Census, through DataFerrett.

**4. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for other departments in state government, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?**

Unable to assess the impact on AOE.

This bill supports low income children in attaining better access to food, therefore the perspective anticipated is positive.

**5. What might be the fiscal and programmatic implications of this bill for others, and what is likely to be their perspective on it?**

Unlikely any fiscal or programmatic implications for others. An increase in food/meals served in schools will generate increased revenues to vendors of food and food service related businesses.

**6. Other Stakeholders:**

**6.1 Who else is likely to support the proposal and why?**

Vermont DOH, OEO, Vermont Food Bank, USDA/FNS, medical providers, educators, Hunger Free Vermont, Community Action Programs, VT 3SQS Workgroup, food shelves.

Why - This bill supports the provision of a basic need to vulnerable citizens. May decrease demand for services and or allow 'helping' resources to stretch further.

**6.2 Who else is likely to oppose the proposal and why?**

Unable to identify any stakeholder unlikely to fully support this important bill.

Why - This bill supports the provision of a basic need to vulnerable citizens.

**7. Rationale for recommendation:**

Nationally: Although this bill is not funded by the USDA, when SNAP benefits are focused on children, the child poverty rate was reduced by 5.6%, the depth of child poverty by 15.5% and the severity of child poverty by 21.3%. (Alleviating Poverty in the United States: The Critical Role of SNAP Benefits (Economic Research Service, April 2012). It is reasonable to assume indirect financial support via this bill will yield similar positive results for the consumers of the no-cost school meals and their families.

Local data: Over one in five Vermont children experiences hunger or food hardship. Many Vermonters find this number surprising. In the United States, a country with so much wealth, it is inconceivable that there are people who struggle to meet their basic needs. And yet, hunger is a daily reality for Americans in every state. Lack of affordable housing, low wages, under or unemployment, a decrease in the number of local, affordable grocery stores, and lack of public transportation all contribute to hunger and food insecurity in Vermont.

**8. Specific modifications that would be needed to recommend support of this bill:**

None.

**Secretary/Commissioner has reviewed this document:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_