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February 17, 2025

Honorable Representative Maxine Dibert
State Capitol Room 128
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Dibert,

On behalf of Brother Francis Shelter Kodiak, thank you for introducing House Bill 12. The Brother Francis Shelter Kodiak Director and Board of Directors support House Bill 12, which proposes to provide free meals to students in Alaska and understands the importance of making its passage a top legislative priority.

Like many towns in Alaska, Kodiak is witnessing families grappling with the harsh realities of the current economy. Our local cost of living is soaring, while the number of available work hours in our larger employers is dwindling. Survival is becoming increasingly challenging, and our children should not bear the brunt of it. Families are often forced to make heart-wrenching choices between paying rent, buying heating fuel, or purchasing food.

Children/students cannot learn when hungry, and for many, school is more than just a place of learning. It's a safe haven that meets their basic needs. By providing meals, we not only reduce absenteeism and increase learning time, but we also ensure that students are nourished and more receptive to learning, thereby enhancing their overall well-being.

Investing in meals is an investment in education, the citizens of Alaska, and our future leaders.

The proposal in House Bill 12 is a well-crafted proposal and offering meals to all students eliminates stigma and ensures that everyone benefits.

Thank you for supporting this revolutionary policy proposal. As you are well aware, nutrition is the cornerstone of learning. Students cannot reach their full potential if they are hungry. House Bill 12, with its transformative potential, will significantly enhance the well-being and outcomes of Alaska's students.

Sincerely,



Susan Smith
Executive Director
Brother Francis Shelter Kodiak
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