



**Testimony to the Senate Education Committee in Support of SB 13**  
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Thank you for the opportunity for the Food Research & Action Center to submit testimony in support of SB 13, which would allow all eligible students in the state of Alaska to participate in the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT) program.

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is the leading national nonprofit organization working to improve public policies and public-private partnerships to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. FRAC has worked for decades to improve and strengthen the federal child nutrition programs through federal and state legislation. We work extensively with federal, state, and local government agencies, schools, private nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders to ensure that the programs reach the children who need them.

**Summer EBT is a proven method to decrease childhood food insecurity when school is out of session.** In 2011, Congress authorized Summer EBT Demonstration Projects to [evaluate the effectiveness of the Summer EBT model](#). A [2016 report](#) by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) found that Summer EBT reduced food insecurity, improved nutrition by allowing families to purchase healthier foods, and had high rates of participation and redemption of benefits. Based on the success of these demonstrations, as well as the [impact of the Pandemic EBT program](#), Congress authorized the new, permanent Summer EBT program in 2022.

**When schools close for summer, millions of children miss out on nutritious meals they rely on during the school year.** Although [traditional summer meal programs](#) aim to support children's health and learning, challenges like transportation, location, and availability often hinder participation, leading to increased hunger during the summer months. [Rural communities](#) often face these logistical challenges, in addition to a general lack of community resources. Households in rural areas are more likely to experience food insecurity than households in metropolitan areas. Summer EBT can help to expand access to meals for families during the summer in both urban and rural communities.

**Participation in the program would bring in millions to support Alaska's economy.** Alaska has an [estimated 58,000 children](#) who would be eligible to receive Summer EBT benefits. This would result in approximately \$6,960,000 in benefits being

distributed to struggling families. According to an [analysis carried out](#) by USDA looking at Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, every dollar spent on SNAP generates between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in local economic activity during an economic downturn. Based on this estimate, Alaska could expect an economic impact of \$10,440,000 to \$12,528,000 from Summer EBT benefits.

**Only 13 states opted out of the program in the first year of implementation, including Alaska.** USDA has [estimated](#) that over 21 million children received over \$2.5 billion in Summer EBT benefits for summer 2024. Summer EBT was [implemented by 37 states](#), Washington D.C., 2 Indian Tribal Organizations, and all 5 territories in its first year. This summer, 2 additional states have signed on to run the program, Alabama and Utah. Alaska is included on a shrinking list of states not providing benefits to eligible students.

**SB 13 shows a monumental investment in the future for the children of Alaska and will fill the summer nutrition gap for children across the state. We urge you to support this important legislation.**