

**HJR**

**24**

<target><bill>HJR 24</bill><subject>HJR  
24</subject><comm>HMLV26</comm></target>

Chair, Judiciary  
Chair, Economic Development,  
Trade & Tourism  
Energy  
Military & Veteran Affairs  
Joint Armed Services  
1292 Sadler Way, Suite 324  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Phone: (907) 452-1088  
Fax: (907) 452-1146

## Alaska State Legislature House of Representatives



While in Session  
State Capitol, Room 118  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
(907) 465-3004  
Fax: (907) 465-2070  
Toll Free: (877) 465-3004

### Representative Jay Ramras District 10

Sponsor Statement  
HJR 24

**“Urging the United States Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture to extend the basic housing allowance exclusion to all military families for purposes of the school nutrition program.”**

House Joint Resolution 24 enables military families that are living off the base to qualify for the school nutrition programs.

Families who live off the base are given an additional basic allowance for housing (BAH). Due to this increase of income children of these families are not qualified for the school nutrition programs. Many of these families are struggling financially. This presents a major issue for families that have one or multiple children to feed and a vital program such as the free lunch program is denied to them because of the location of their homes and increased income due to the basic allowance for housing.

HJR 24 encourages the United States Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture to look at the issue presented to the heroic military men and women and thus their families. This is an opportunity to ensure our military families do not have to endure additional hardships while a family member is defending our country.

Representative\_Jay\_Ramras@legis.state.ak.us



Alaska School Nutrition Association

March 23, 2009

Honorable Congressman Young,

On behalf of the Alaska School Nutrition Association (AKSNA) I would like to congratulate you on your re-election. It is a time of change and extreme need in our country and we look forward to your leadership.

As a former member of the military and a supporter of child nutrition, I thought you would like to know about the Military Nutrition Protection Act introduced by Senator Michael Bennett from Colorado. He is seeking to exclude combat pay in eligibility requirements that eliminate dependents of deployed service members out of any special nutrition assistance programs. Those include free and reduced price school meals and supplemental nutrition assistance for women, infants, and children, otherwise known as "WIC" programs. Current regulations allow us to exclude the portion of income sent to the deployed household member yet that is not typically enough to provide benefits to these children.


In the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, we have two military bases -- Ft. Wainwright and Eielson Air Force Base. There are currently over 5,000 members deployed overseas, several who have left behind families. The military receive many different types of adjustments -- e.g. COLA, BAH (housing assistance) -- that when combat pay is received can result in their children being ineligible for meal benefits. This can cause additional stress for those deployed and the families.

Last month, I spoke with state Representative Jay Ramras' office regarding the above issue and the disparity between households living on and those off of military installations. Soon all military families will be receiving BAH and we are informed that families on military installations do not have to include the housing assistance as income but those living off the installation do. This causes a disparity in treatment as school nutrition directors have been informed that if assistance is received monetarily and not in-kind, it must be counted as income when processing children for meal benefits. He and his staff are drafting a resolution supporting the exclusion of housing assistance as income for all military households.

These issues are seen every place a military installation is -- from Kodiak to Anchorage to Delta to Fairbanks. This is an opportunity to ensure our military families do not have to endure additional hardships while a family member is defending our country. With Congress' reauthorization of the Child Nutrition programs and Senator Bennett's legislation, there is an opportunity to ensure equitable treatment for our students in Alaska.

Please contact me if you have additional questions regarding these issues or as questions arise during the Reauthorization process. You may contact me at (907) 452-2000 x332 or [arouse@northstar.k12.ak.us](mailto:arouse@northstar.k12.ak.us) Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

  
Amy C. Rouse, SNS  
Director, Nutrition Services  
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District  
520 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Fairbanks, AK 99701



## Exclusive: Michelle Obama's Emotional Meeting With Military Families

First Lady Tells ABC News That President Obama Is 'What We Need Right Now'

By KAREN TRAVERS

March 13, 2009—

First lady Michelle Obama says she is distressed by the plight of many military families who are struggling to keep their heads above the poverty line while the soldier in the family is in harm's way in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Michelle Obama opened up to Robin Roberts on "Good Morning America" in her first television interview since she became first lady.

**Watch more of Robin Roberts' interview with first lady Michelle Obama on "World News With Charles Gibson" at 6:30 p.m. ET and "Nightline" at 11:35 p.m. ET**

During the interview, the first lady talked about everything from her husband's handling of the presidency to what's been broken in the White House since the Obama's moved in.

But she was at her most emotional in talking about the families of soldiers and their financial battles while a parent is deployed to battle al Qaeda or the Taliban.

"It hurts. It hurts," the first lady said of hearing about military families on food stamps. "These are people who are willing to send their loved ones off to, perhaps, give their lives -- the ultimate sacrifice. But yet, they're living back at home on food stamps. It's not right, and it's not where we should be as a nation."

To highlight that concern, Mrs. Obama made her first trip outside Washington as first lady Thursday to Fort Bragg, N.C., where she visited with military families. It was an emotional meeting that clearly moved her.

"Our soldiers and their families have done their duty. They do it without complaint. And we as a grateful nation must do ours and do everything in our power to honor them by supporting them," she said at the Fort Bragg Community Center.

### First Trip to Fort Bragg

During her visit to Fort Bragg, the first lady read "The Cat in the Hat" to a dozen preschoolers at the Prager Child Development Center, and the folks at Fort Bragg were touched by her performance.

"It was like she was reading to her children," said Mattie White, a lead education technician at Fort

Bragg.

While reading "The Cat in the Hat," the first lady told the children she had two young daughters, and one tyke chimed in "I know Sasha."

Her concern for military families is an agenda issue that began during the presidential campaign, and one that she vowed she would continue to work on from the East Wing of the White House.

The Fort Bragg visit is a setting that the first lady seems comfortable in -- it combines her top policy issue and the qualities of the "mom-in-chief" she aims to be.

And any mention of the Obama daughters, Malia, 10, and Sasha, 7, is an emotional touchstone for Mrs. Obama and, she suggests, for many in the country.

"You know, I just think, 'How sweet.' That's the power of kids connecting with other kids," the first lady said after the Fort Bragg child shouted out Sasha's name. "I think that that's, you know, been wonderful for the nation to have two little kids in the White House that they connect to."

Besides the financial woes of military families, the first lady said she is aware of how many American families are struggling during the economic recession. But she remains confident in her husband and the nation. "I wouldn't want anybody but Barack Obama to be working at this time, because he is a focused, clear-thinking, rational man -- and that's what we need right now," she said. "I'm coming off of a boost of understanding all that our country is made of, the values, the men, the women, people who are looking for the silver lining, even in tough times."

The first lady told Roberts about how she has taken time in the first few weeks in the White House to get to know the new city she now calls home and to make the rounds visiting various federal agencies. She has met with thousands of men and women who now work for her husband.

She makes these visits to thank the people she calls "the backbone of our government," and rally them for more work ahead.

It's also a chance for her to hear the concerns of federal government employees and relay them back to the president.

At each stop, she makes a point to meet privately with a smaller group of staffers before she delivers remarks. She has asked to meet with the longest-serving staff members at these agencies, and when she visited the Department of Interior last month, some of the employees she spoke with had worked there for nearly 40 years.

"Part of what I want to do is to tell them, 'Thank you. Thank you for your service.' They make up the foundation of this democracy as well," she said.

She plans to get to every federal agency over the next few months.

Michelle Obama is adjusting to her many new roles, including hostess-in-chief, she said. The first family has hosted regular Wednesday night social gatherings at the White House and two formal dinners in less than two months.

For Super Bowl Sunday, the Obamas opened the White House to friends and members of Congress and

their families.

Living in a home with antiques, historic artifacts and two small children might be an accident waiting to happen, but the first lady said, so far, the children have not broken anything.

"We've had some guests who've broken some things but not the kids," she said with a laugh. "And they know who they are."

Both the first lady and the president have talked about the simple joy of being able to eat dinner together every night at the White House after two long years on the campaign trail.

"There's time to breathe a little bit, at least as a family. We're breathing in a way that we haven't breathed in a long time. And it feels good," she told Roberts.

Her daughters, she said, are doing "great" after two months in Washington.

"I think they're doing great because I've been able to strike a balance," she said. "I have a pretty full plate, but I still have time to be home for homework and to make sure I'm there before they leave, and to go to their parent-teacher conferences and all the things that it's important to do as a parent. So they're doing great. They keep us going."

### **First Lady Michelle Obama on Family's White House Transition**

The first lady credited her mother, Marian Robinson, with helping to ease the transition for her and her daughters and called Robinson's presence in the White House "immeasurable."

"First of all, she's one of the funniest people I know. And she's so nonimpressed by any of this. She keeps all of our feet on the ground," Michelle Obama said.

Robinson is there to lend a hand with the girls when the first lady's own schedule prevents her from being there, she said.

"Like today, when I'm out and about, I'm gone all day, she's picking them up, she's getting them through homework. She's, you know, making sure that they practice piano, all the things that moms would do," she said. "But she does it with that little extra kick of love, and a little extra piece of dessert, tonight, I'm sure is going on."

The first lady laughed when Roberts suggested her morning workout routine was paying off.

"Well, I covered my arms up" for the interview, she said, noting her departure from her well-documented fondness for sleeveless dress. Life in the White House for the new first lady starts with an early morning workout and ends with a late night "veg out" in front of the TV, the first lady confided to Roberts.

"I must confess," she said. "Sometimes I just click on some non-important TV and just veg out."

Copyright © 2009 ABC News Internet Ventures

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA  
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: HJR 24  
 () Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Identifier (file name): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title HJR 24 FED. SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM/MILITARY RDU \_\_\_\_\_  
 Component \_\_\_\_\_  
 Sponsor Representative Jay Ramras  
 Requester Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Component Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)**

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
<b>OPERATING EXPENDITURES</b>								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual								
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>								
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>								
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)**

1002 Federal Receipts								
1003 GF Match								
1004 GF								
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts								
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: \_\_\_\_\_

**POSITIONS**

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Prepared by: House Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Division \_\_\_\_\_ Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_  
 Approved by: Represtatve Carl Gatto Date 3/31/2009

**Representative Jay Ramras**  
**Chair, House Judiciary**  
**House Labor & Commerce**  
**House Oil & Gas**  
**House Military & Veteran**  
**Affairs**

1292 Sadler Way, Suite 324  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
Phone: (907) 452-1088  
Fax: (907) 452-1146

# Alaska State Legislature



While in Session  
**State Capitol, Room 118**  
**Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182**  
(907) 465-3004  
Fax: 465-2070  
Toll Free: (877) 465-3004

**House District 10**

## House of Representatives

### Memo

To: Representative Gatto  
Chair House Military and Veteran Affairs Committee

From: Representative Jay Ramras

Date: March 20, 2009

Re: HJR24 – Federal School Lunch Program/Military

---

Please consider this memorandum as a request for the House Military and Veterans Affairs Committee to schedule a hearing for HJR 24. Accompanying this memo are the following documents:

- Sponsor Statement
- 26-LS0710\A
- Support

Thank you for your time and consideration, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Dana Strommen at 465-3004.

Representative\_Jay\_Ramras@legis.state.ak.us