

SENATE BILL REPORT

SSB 5971

AS PASSED SENATE, APRIL 14, 1993

Brief Description: Expanding school breakfast and lunch programs.

SPONSORS: Senate Committee on Ways & Means (originally sponsored by Senators Pelz, Talmadge and Bauer; by request of Governor Lowry)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5971 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rinehart, Chairman; Bauer, Bluechel, Gaspard, Hargrove, Hochstatter, Jesernig, McDonald, Owen, Pelz, Quigley, Roach, Snyder, Sutherland, Talmadge, West, Williams, and Wojahn.

Staff: Bill Freund (786-7441)

Hearing Dates: April 8, 1993; April 13, 1993

BACKGROUND:

Most school districts of the state participate in school lunch and school breakfast programs. These programs are subsidized by the federal government through the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. Since 1979, state funding for this program has been limited to that required for federal matching purposes. For the 1991-93 biennium, state matching funds for this program were \$6 million and federal funds amounted to \$148 million.

Under the federal school lunch and breakfast programs, meals are offered to students at full price, reduced price, or free, according to uniform national eligibility criteria based on family income and size. Currently, family income at or below 130 percent of the poverty level qualifies students for free meals, and below 185 percent of poverty level qualifies students for reduced price meals. For a family of four, 130 percent of poverty is an income of \$18,143 per year, and 185 percent is \$26,016 per year.

In 1989, the Legislature enacted legislation which required each school district to implement a school breakfast program by the 1992-93 school year if 40 percent or more of school lunches in the district were served to students eligible for free or reduce priced meals. State survey data indicates that in the 1991-92 school year 97.1 percent of school children in Washington had access to the lunch program and 62.8 percent had access to the breakfast program.

SUMMARY:

Beginning in school year 1993-94, all school districts with a lunch program must institute a breakfast program. Beginning in 1994-95, all school districts not having a breakfast or lunch program must institute one or the other and must offer both in the 1995-96 school year.

School districts involved in major construction projects may apply for a two-year waiver.

Schools are eligible for state funds if application has been made for all applicable federal funds.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction administers the program. The Superintendent of Public Instruction provides grants to support existing programs and to help school districts start school breakfast or lunch programs. State funds can only be used for foods, supplies and labor costs.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction provides grants for summer food programs.

An annual report is required.

The bill is null and void if funding is not provided in the budget.

Appropriation: none

Revenue: none

Fiscal Note: available

TESTIMONY FOR:

Hungry children cannot learn and school meal programs need to be expanded. Participation in school meal programs needs to be increased, and meal quality improved.

TESTIMONY AGAINST:

Paying for meal programs will reduce funds available for education.

TESTIFIED: Margaret Tafoya, Governor's office (pro); Betty Marcelynas, Superintendent of Public Instruction (pro); Galen MacDonald, Washington School Food Service Association (pro); Ed James, Seattle School District (pro); Linda Stone, Anti-Hunger Nutrition Coalition (pro); Paul Locke (con); David Westberg, Stationary Engineers (pro)

HOUSE AMENDMENT(S):

The mandate that all school districts provide a federally approved breakfast and lunch program by 1995 is removed.

State funds for breakfast and lunch programs may only be used for operating costs unless a specific appropriation for nonoperating costs is made.

The annual report requirement is eliminated.