



COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION & LABOR  
REPUBLICANS

COMMITTEE  
STATEMENT

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**Opening Statement of Rep. James Comer (R-KY), Republican Leader  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Human Services Hearing:  
“Examining the Budget and Policy Priorities of USDA/FNS”  
June 4, 2019**

“We’re here today because we understand that USDA and the child nutrition programs it helps support, serve a critical role in ensuring that America’s youth have access to nutritious and healthy food. I believe wholeheartedly that no kid should go hungry. The wellbeing of every American child is important, and proper nutrition is part of helping children succeed in life.

Students cannot learn if they are hungry. The school meal program provides valuable assistance to schools to help meet the needs of their students through the breakfast, lunch, and snack programs.

USDA must do all it can to make the administration of these school meal programs as easy as possible, while continuously improving program efficiency and integrity. Systems run best when they’re operated from the ground up, so less paperwork and administrative burden would aid in refocusing these programs back to their original intent – serving our students.

Another important program FNS oversees is the Summer Food Service Program. As we know this program helps provide meals to kids in need during the summer months and I look forward to working with the administration to help reach more children, especially in rural communities.

WIC is another program that I hope we discuss with our witness today. This program helps provide young children access to better nutrition. There are many positive aspects of this program, and we must ensure benefits are reaching their intended recipients by making any needed reforms to prevent waste and abuse. I

am hopeful the switch to electronic benefits will help and I again look forward to working with USDA to see how we can best help states to support some of our most vulnerable constituents.

In general, rather than focusing on increased federal dollars or regulations that limit local providers' ability to provide nutritious meals, USDA should work with their local partners to help kids with the greatest need get nutritious meals. As someone who has worked on these programs as the Commissioner of Agriculture in Kentucky, I can attest to the importance of the national government providing these programs the freedom, resources, and accountability they need to find and tackle childhood hunger.

The people sharing neighborhoods and towns with hungry youth are more capable of addressing the needs they face than legislators in Washington. Recognizing this fact is the best way to address the individual needs of children and promises the greatest results in getting food into the stomachs of America's hungriest children.

I look forward to learning more about the Department's efforts to address these pressing needs, and I'm eager to work with my colleagues to defeat childhood hunger."

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