

Dear Committee on Children,

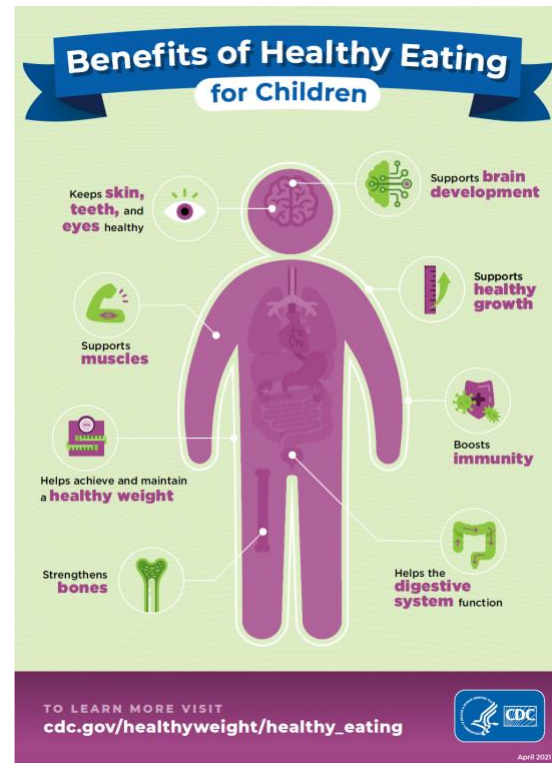
I am a pediatrician who works in New Haven and Advocacy Chair for the CT-American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter. These are my personal views and do not reflect those of my employer.

I am writing in **support** of **SB 1217 AN ACT PROVIDING SCHOOL MEALS TO ALL STUDENTS**.

The American Academy of Pediatrics [advocates for expanding access to nutritional assistance programs](#) such as the WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), and **school nutrition programs**. This helps to ensure that child experience the benefits of healthy eating such as improved brain development, boosted immunity, strong bones and muscles, and normal growth (image).

Children who experience food insecurity, defined as a lack of consistent access to enough food or nutritious food, are at an increased risk of multiple negative health outcomes. [Children who are food insecure](#) are more likely to become ill, develop chronic diseases, and have nutritional deficiencies. They are also more likely to become hospitalized and have [increased medical costs](#). [Children who experience hunger](#)

have impaired learning in school, are at increased risk of developmental delays and are more likely to experience emotional and behavioral challenges. [Hunger is also harmful to parents](#). When families experience food insecurity, parents are chronically stressed and are at increased risk of developing mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression.



[One in six children](#) in CT experience hunger. SB 1217 would increase access to free school meals for all children and would be an essential way to combat food insecurity for CT's children.

Thank you for considering my testimony. Please reach out with questions.

Sincerely,

Molly Markowitz, MD FAAP

Chair, Advocacy Committee

CT-American Academy of Pediatrics Chapter

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