

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a pilot program to award grants to school food authorities to provide 100 percent plant-based food and milk options, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. SCHIFF introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a pilot program to award grants to school food authorities to provide 100 percent plant-based food and milk options, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Plant-Powered School  
5       Meals Pilot Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PLANT-BASED FOODS IN SCHOOLS.**

2 Section 18 of the Richard B. Russell National School  
3 Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1769) is amended by inserting after  
4 subsection (c) the following:

5 “(d) PILOT PROGRAM FOR 100 PERCENT PLANT-  
6 BASED FOOD OPTIONS.—

7 “(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

8 “(A) 100 PERCENT PLANT-BASED FOOD  
9 OPTION.—The term ‘100 percent plant-based  
10 food option’ means a breakfast or lunch meal  
11 option or component that—

12 “(i) includes a meat alternate as de-  
13 scribed in—

14 “(I) section 210.10 of title 7,  
15 Code of Federal Regulations (or suc-  
16 cessor regulations); or

17 “(II) appendix A to part 210 of  
18 title 7, Code of Federal Regulations  
19 (or successor regulations); and

20 “(ii) does not contain any animal  
21 product or byproduct, such as meat, poul-  
22 try, honey, fish, dairy, or eggs.

23 “(B) BEGINNING FARMER OR RANCHER.—

24 The term ‘beginning farmer or rancher’ has the  
25 meaning given the term in section 343(a) of the

1 Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act  
2 (7 U.S.C. 1991(a)).

3 “(C) CERTIFIED ORGANIC FARM.—The  
4 term ‘certified organic farm’ has the meaning  
5 given the term in section 2103 of the Food, Ag-  
6 riculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990  
7 (7 U.S.C. 6502).

8 “(D) ELIGIBLE SCHOOL FOOD AUTHOR-  
9 ITY.—The term ‘eligible school food authority’  
10 means a school food authority that serves stu-  
11 dents 50 percent or more of which are eligible  
12 for free or reduced price lunch under this Act  
13 or free or reduced price breakfast under section  
14 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C.  
15 1773).

16 “(E) ORGANICALLY PRODUCED.—The  
17 term ‘organically produced’ has the meaning  
18 given the term in section 2103 of the Food, Ag-  
19 riculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990  
20 (7 U.S.C. 6502).

21 “(F) PRODUCER.—The term ‘producer’  
22 has the meaning given the term in section 2103  
23 of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and  
24 Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 6502).

1           “(G) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’  
2           means the pilot program established under  
3           paragraph (2).

4           “(H) UNDERSERVED PRODUCER.—The  
5           term ‘underserved producer’ means an indi-  
6           vidual (including a member of an Indian Tribe)  
7           that is—

8                   “(i) a beginning farmer or rancher;

9                   “(ii) a veteran farmer or rancher (as  
10           defined in section 2501(a) of the Food,  
11           Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act  
12           of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 2279(a))); or

13                   “(iii) a socially disadvantaged farmer  
14           or rancher (as defined in that section).

15           “(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days  
16           after the date of enactment of the Plant-Powered  
17           School Meals Pilot Act, the Secretary shall establish  
18           a pilot program to award grants to eligible school  
19           food authorities to carry out the activities described  
20           in paragraph (5).

21           “(3) GRANTS.—

22                   “(A) TERM.—The term of a grant awarded  
23           under the program shall be 3 years.

1 “(B) AMOUNT.—The Secretary shall award  
2 grants under the program in diverse amounts to  
3 the extent practicable.

4 “(4) APPLICATION.—

5 “(A) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to re-  
6 ceive a grant under the program, an eligible  
7 school food authority shall submit to the Sec-  
8 retary an application at such time, in such  
9 manner, and containing such information as the  
10 Secretary may require, including—

11 “(i) a participatory evaluation plan;  
12 and

13 “(ii) a plan for providing culturally  
14 appropriate meals.

15 “(B) PRIORITY.—To the maximum extent  
16 practicable, in awarding grants under the pro-  
17 gram, the Secretary shall give priority to an eli-  
18 gible school food authority that will use the  
19 grant funds—

20 “(i) to serve a high proportion of chil-  
21 dren who are eligible for free or reduced  
22 price meals;

23 “(ii) to collaborate with nongovern-  
24 mental and community-based organiza-  
25 tions, agricultural producers, and other

1 community partners with respect to the ac-  
2 tivities described in paragraph (5);

3 “(iii) to incorporate experiential and  
4 culturally appropriate plant-based food,  
5 nutrition, or agricultural education activi-  
6 ties related to 100 percent plant-based  
7 food options in the classroom;

8 “(iv) to incorporate organically pro-  
9 duced 100 percent plant-based food op-  
10 tions; and

11 “(v) to meet any other criteria that  
12 the Secretary determines appropriate.

13 “(5) USE OF FUNDS.—A grant awarded under  
14 the program may be used for any of the following  
15 activities:

16 “(A) To contract with qualified third par-  
17 ties for professional development training for  
18 food service personnel relating to serving (in-  
19 cluding preparing, procuring, marketing, and  
20 creating menus) 100 percent plant-based food  
21 options.

22 “(B) To provide compensation to each em-  
23 ployee who participates in the professional de-  
24 velopment training described in subparagraph  
25 (A) at the regular rate of pay of such employee.

1           “(C) To provide technical assistance and  
2           student engagement and education on 100 per-  
3           cent plant-based food options, including pro-  
4           viding taste tests, recipe development, and cul-  
5           inary education.

6           “(D) To provide compensation for addi-  
7           tional work relating to serving meals that in-  
8           clude a 100 percent plant-based food option.

9           “(E) To conduct outreach to, and cover  
10          costs of procurement of foods from, agricultural  
11          producers of 100 percent plant-based food op-  
12          tions, including—

13               “(i) underserved producers;

14               “(ii) limited resource farmers or  
15               ranchers (as defined by the Secretary);

16               “(iii) producers on a certified organic  
17               farm; and

18               “(iv) local farmers.

19          “(6) RECORDKEEPING REQUIRED.—Each eligi-  
20          ble school food authority awarded a grant under the  
21          program shall keep records of the 100 percent plant-  
22          based food options served, as the Secretary deter-  
23          mines appropriate.

24          “(7) REPORTS.—

1           “(A) SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITIES.—Not  
2 later than 1 year after receiving a grant under  
3 the program, and annually for the duration of  
4 the grant term, an eligible school food authority  
5 shall submit to the Secretary a report on the  
6 activities carried out using the grant, including  
7 information on—

8                   “(i) the number of 100 percent plant-  
9 based food options that the eligible school  
10 food authority served during the grant pe-  
11 riod compared with the preceding school  
12 year;

13                   “(ii) the number of schools served by  
14 the eligible school food authority pursuant  
15 to the grant; and

16                   “(iii) the number of students served  
17 by the eligible school food authority pursu-  
18 ant to the grant.

19           “(B) REPORT BY SECRETARY.—With re-  
20 spect to each school year during which the Sec-  
21 retary receives a report under subparagraph  
22 (A), the Secretary shall, not later than 1 year  
23 after the date that is the last day of that school  
24 year, submit to Congress a report that in-  
25 cludes—



1 “(i) a summary of the reports received  
2 during that school year; and

3 “(ii) such information with respect to  
4 the program as the Secretary determines  
5 to be relevant.

6 “(8) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary  
7 shall provide technical assistance and information to  
8 assist eligible school food authorities receiving grants  
9 under the program—

10 “(A) to facilitate the coordination and  
11 sharing of information and resources that may  
12 be applicable to the activities described in para-  
13 graph (5); and

14 “(B) to collect and share information on  
15 best practices.

16 “(9) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—  
17 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out  
18 this subsection \$10,000,000 for fiscal year 2026, to  
19 remain available through fiscal year 2030.”.

20 **SEC. 3. ACCOMMODATING DIETARY REQUIREMENTS.**

21 Section 9(a)(2) of the Richard B. Russell National  
22 School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1758(a)(2)) is amended—

23 (1) in subparagraph (A)(iii)—

1 (A) by inserting “or other medical or spe-  
2 cial dietary need” after “disability” each place  
3 it appears; and

4 (B) by striking “or legal guardian” and in-  
5 serting “legal guardian, or student”;

6 (2) by striking subparagraphs (B) and (E);

7 (3) by redesignating subparagraphs (C) and  
8 (D) as subparagraphs (B) and (C), respectively; and

9 (4) by adding at the end the following:

10 “(D) PILOT PROGRAM.—

11 “(i) DEFINITION OF ELIGIBLE  
12 SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY.—In this sub-  
13 paragraph, the term ‘eligible school food  
14 authority’ has the meaning given the term  
15 in section 18(d)(1).

16 “(ii) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later  
17 than 90 days after the date of enactment  
18 of the Plant-Powered School Meals Pilot  
19 Act, the Secretary shall establish a pilot  
20 program to award grants to eligible school  
21 food authorities to reimburse the full cost  
22 incurred by the eligible school food author-  
23 ity of providing nondairy beverages as sub-  
24 stitutes for fluid milk under subparagraph  
25 (A)(ii).

## 11

1 “(iii) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants  
2 under this subparagraph, the Secretary  
3 may give priority to—

4 “(I) an eligible school food au-  
5 thority that serves high proportions of  
6 students with lactose intolerance; and

7 “(II) an eligible school food au-  
8 thority that demonstrates, as part of  
9 the application for a grant under this  
10 subparagraph, a need for nondairy  
11 beverages for students served by the  
12 eligible school food authority due to  
13 dietary reasons.

14 “(iv) REPORTS.—

15 “(I) ANNUAL REPORT BY  
16 SCHOOL FOOD AUTHORITY.—Not later  
17 than 1 year after receiving a grant  
18 under this subparagraph, and on an  
19 annual basis for the duration of the  
20 grant, an eligible school food authority  
21 shall submit to the Secretary a report  
22 on the pilot grant program, including  
23 information on—

24 “(aa) the number of schools  
25 and students that were provided

1 nondairy beverages as substitutes  
2 for fluid milk under subpara-  
3 graph (A)(ii) by the eligible  
4 school food authority; and

5 “(bb) in the case of the final  
6 report submitted under this sub-  
7 clause, the number of such bev-  
8 erages that the eligible school  
9 food authority served during the  
10 grant period compared with the  
11 number of such beverages that  
12 the eligible school food authority  
13 served during the school year im-  
14 mediately preceding the start of  
15 the grant period.

16 “(II) REPORT BY THE SEC-  
17 RETARY.—Not later than 180 days  
18 after the date described in clause (v),  
19 the Secretary shall submit to Con-  
20 gress a report on the pilot program  
21 carried out under this subparagraph,  
22 including a summary of the informa-  
23 tion included in the reports received  
24 under this clause from eligible school  
25 food authorities.

1                   “(v) SUNSET.—The authority to carry  
2                   out this subparagraph shall terminate on  
3                   the date that is 3 years after the date of  
4                   enactment of the Plant-Powered School  
5                   Meals Pilot Act.

6                   “(vi) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIA-  
7                   TIONS.—There is authorized to be appro-  
8                   priated to carry out this subparagraph  
9                   \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2026, to remain  
10                  available until the date described in clause  
11                  (v).

12                  “(E) DEFINITION OF SPECIAL DIETARY  
13                  NEED.—In this paragraph, the term ‘special di-  
14                  etary need’ means a dietary need that does not  
15                  constitute a disability, including a dietary need  
16                  relating to religious or moral conviction.”.