

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to allow benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program to be used to purchase on-campus meals.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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

A BILL

To amend the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to allow benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program to be used to purchase on-campus meals.

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 “Hot Meals for College
5 Students Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. USE OF BENEFITS FOR ON-CAMPUS MEALS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7 of the Food and Nutri-
8 tion Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2016) is amended by adding
9 at the end the following:

1 “(1) USE OF BENEFITS FOR ON-CAMPUS MEALS.—

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

3 “(A) COLLEGE STUDENT.—The term ‘col-
4 lege student’ means a student enrolled in an in-
5 stitution of higher education.

6 “(B) ELIGIBLE STUDENT HOUSEHOLD.—
7 The term ‘eligible student household’ means a
8 household that—

9 “(i) is certified to participate in the
10 supplemental nutrition assistance program;
11 and

12 “(ii) includes a college student who is
13 eligible to participate in that program as a
14 member of the household.

15 “(C) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDU-
16 CATION.—The term ‘institution of higher edu-
17 cation’ has the meaning given the term in sec-
18 tion 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965
19 (20 U.S.C. 1002).

20 “(D) ON-CAMPUS MEAL.—The term ‘on-
21 campus meal’ means prepared food, including
22 hot foods or hot food products ready for imme-
23 diate consumption, but excluding alcoholic bev-
24 erages, tobacco, and nonfood items, that—

1 “(i) is sold at a dining hall, store, or
2 other food service location located on the
3 campus of an institution of higher edu-
4 cation and operated by an on-campus mer-
5 chant; and

6 “(ii) is purchased in a single trans-
7 action for a specific meal, including
8 through online or mobile technology in ac-
9 cordance with subsection (h)(14) or (k),
10 and, if benefits are accepted before delivery
11 of the meal, in accordance with section 10.

12 “(E) ON-CAMPUS MERCHANT.—The term
13 ‘on-campus merchant’ means—

14 “(i) an institution of higher education
15 that operates a food service location de-
16 scribed in subparagraph (D)(i); and

17 “(ii) a third-party food service con-
18 tractor, subcontractor, or vendor that oper-
19 ates such a location under a written agree-
20 ment with the institution of higher edu-
21 cation.

22 “(2) USE OF BENEFITS.—

23 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Effective beginning on
24 the date on which final regulations are issued
25 under paragraph (4), benefits issued to an eligi-

1 ble student household may be used by the eligi-
2 ble student household to purchase on-campus
3 meals.

4 “(B) PROHIBITED TRANSACTIONS.—Bene-
5 fits under subparagraph (A) may not be used—

6 “(i) to purchase or prepay a meal
7 plan at an institution of higher education;

8 “(ii) to add value to a dining or
9 stored-value account;

10 “(iii) to pay an outstanding balance
11 on a college student account; or

12 “(iv) to pay a fee, gratuity, or other
13 nonfood charge.

14 “(3) AUTHORIZATION OF ON-CAMPUS MER-
15 CHANTS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—An on-campus merchant shall be eligible to apply for authorization under section 9 and, as applicable, under subsection (k), to accept and redeem benefits solely for on-campus meals.

21 “(B) NO FEES OR SURCHARGES.—An on-
22 campus merchant authorized to accept and re-
23 deem benefits—

24 “(i) shall charge the same prices and
25 offer the same terms and conditions for

1 purchases made with benefits as for pur-
2 chases made with funds other than bene-
3 fits; and

4 “(ii) shall not impose a fee or sur-
5 charge for the use of benefits.

6 “(4) IMPLEMENTATION.—Not later than 1 year
7 after the date of enactment of this subsection, the
8 Secretary shall issue such regulations and guidance
9 as are necessary to carry out this subsection, includ-
10 ing requirements relating to—

11 “(A) authorization and oversight of on-
12 campus merchants;

13 “(B) identification of eligible student
14 households through the electronic benefit trans-
15 fer system without requiring an on-campus
16 merchant to collect or retain information about
17 the status of any college student;

18 “(C) protection of personally identifiable
19 information, including limiting disclosure to in-
20 formation necessary to authorize a transaction;

21 “(D) compliance by on-campus merchants
22 with the requirements of this Act, including
23 subsection (k), section 10, and sections
24 274.7(b) and 278.2(e) of title 7, Code of Fed-
25 eral Regulations (or successor regulations); and

1 “(E) technical assistance to State agencies,
2 institutions of higher education, and on-campus
3 merchants.

4 “(5) STUDY AND REPORT.—

5 “(A) STUDY.—The Secretary shall conduct
6 a study on the use of supplemental nutrition as-
7 sistance program benefits to purchase on-cam-
8 pus meals under this subsection, including—

9 “(i)(I) the number of institutions of
10 higher education at which on-campus mer-
11 chants are authorized; and

12 “(II) the types of institutions of high-
13 er education at which on-campus mer-
14 chants described in paragraph (1)(E)(ii)
15 operate, including community colleges, mi-
16 nority-serving institutions, Tribal Colleges
17 and Universities, and rural-serving institu-
18 tions;

19 “(ii) estimates on the number of eligi-
20 ble student households purchasing on-cam-
21 pus meals;

22 “(iii) redemption patterns, including
23 transactions completed through online or
24 mobile technology;

1 “(iv) barriers to authorization or par-
2 ticipation experienced by on-campus mer-
3 chants and eligible student households; and

4 “(v)(I) rates and levels of food inse-
5 curity among college students;

6 “(II) the effect of this subsection on
7 food security among college students at
8 participating institutions of higher edu-
9 cation; and

10 “(III) retention rates among college
11 students who report experiencing food inse-
12 curity.

13 “(B) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years
14 after the date of enactment of this subsection,
15 the Secretary shall make publicly available, and
16 submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-
17 tion, and Forestry of the Senate and the Com-
18 mittee on Agriculture of the House of Rep-
19 resentatives, a report describing the results of
20 the study conducted under subparagraph (A),
21 including any recommendations for legislative
22 action, administrative action, or guidance to im-
23 prove college student access to on-campus meals
24 under the supplemental nutrition assistance
25 program.

1 “(6) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in
2 this subsection—

3 “(A) alters the eligibility requirements for
4 college students under section 6(e); or

5 “(B) deems a college student to be a resi-
6 dent of an institution for purposes of section
7 3(m)(4) solely because a college student in an
8 eligible student household purchases an on-cam-
9 pus meal in a single transaction under this sub-
10 section.”.

11 (b) DEFINITIONS.—Section 3 of the Food and Nutri-
12 tion Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2012) is amended—

13 (1) in subsection (k)—

14 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “clauses
15 (3), (4), (5), (7), (8), and (9) of this sub-
16 section” and inserting “paragraphs (3), (4),
17 (5), and (7) through (10)”;

18 (B) by striking “and (9)” and inserting
19 “(9)”; and

20 (C) by striking the period at the end and
21 inserting “, and (10) in the case of an eligible
22 student household (as defined in section
23 7(l)(1)), an on-campus meal (as defined in that
24 section) sold by an on-campus merchant (as de-
25 fined in that section).”; and

1 (2) in subsection (o)(2), by striking “para-
2 graphs (3), (4), (5), (7), (8), and (9)” and inserting
3 “paragraphs (3), (4), (5), and (7) through (10)”.

4 (c) COST OF POINT-OF-SALE EQUIPMENT.—Section
5 7(f)(2)(B)(ii) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7
6 U.S.C. 2016(f)(2)(B)(ii)) is amended by striking “(3), (4),
7 and (9)” and inserting “(3), (4), (9), and (10)”.