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I would like to submit my testimony about my experience as a child in Maine, and being able to have school lunch. When I was in third grade in Oakland, around 1970, I lived in a home where there was no food security. We were eligible for reduced lunch, which I believe would have cost about \$0.10 per meal. My younger brother and I had parents who did not want to pay for those meals. We went without food often. One year, my grandmother came for a visit, and went to our school to meet with the principal. She paid the lunch staff so that we could have two years of hot lunches without even having to get tickets. This made such an amazing difference to our lives! Sometimes this was the only meal we had. I remember how my brother would talk with me about how happy he was when we had corned beef hash at school, because it was really delicious, and lots of kids wouldn't eat it, so some of them would give theirs to us.

I work as a teacher now, and have seen how having a healthy meal everyday, and knowing it will be there, can really impact a child's learning and emotional well-being. I am 64, but still remember the great relief and happiness I felt when I knew I could go to school and there would be a warm meal there.

I hope you will consider passing this bill, as it will greatly improve the lives of many children who need the security of knowing that they will have a safe place to grow and learn, and where they will always know there will be a healthy meal each day. Thank you so much for your time.