

Testimony of Matthew McGowen, Windham High School
LR 1396 and LD655

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Matthew McGowen, I'm a JMG Senior at Windham High School.

I want to talk about why school meals are important to me and many of my peers. I believe that school meals can free the air and superiority of students being able to afford and not afford lunch. It evens all out so no one is above another, leaving everyone equal. For me, it's especially important because in my house my mom's working multiple hours to afford our house, basic needs, and food for our house. Our Dad works but he does handy-man jobs when they're available. 90% of the pressure to provide for our family is put on my mom. With that being said, my 3 brothers and I are on the school meal plan for free lunches. I'm lucky, in that, I've had free meals since before Covid was around. My brother's and I have been able to receive free meals since 7th grade. This has helped my mom save money and use it for other things.

The 30 minute lunch extension is something I'm really passionate about. The time it takes to get from the top or bottom floor of my school can be 3-4 minutes walking. On top of that, on certain days the lunch special has kids lined and can sometimes be a very long wait, taking up to 5-7 minutes. This leaves students with less than 10 minutes to eat and go to their next class. I believe that 20 minute lunches are unfair. 30 minute lunches would be more beneficial in allowing students to be able to eat a full meal and not have to discard what they don't have time to eat. In addition, one of my fellow peers who is in a vocational program, has a problem accessing lunch. He has to drive to voc which requires that he grab his lunch and go. He struggles to get there in time because he's also trying to eat while he's driving. This is annoying for him and many other voc students and has been a constant struggle for him and the lunch extension could really help him and many other voc students.

In conclusion the school meals for all is a great way to help me, my brothers, my peers, and especially my mother.

Thank you,
Matthew McGowen
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