

Timeline of JM child nutrition and COVID-19

March 12, 2020: Senator Manchin wrote to Secretary Perdue ahead of our state's first confirmed case of COVID-19 to urge him to approve the West Virginia Department of Education's application to for a waiver on the congregate feeding requirements under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act. This waiver would allow schools to serve meals to students that could be consumed off-site in a non-congregate setting and be claimed for federal reimbursement in the event schools shut down due to COVID-19. Late that night, USDA approved this waiver and the state was notified accordingly.

March 18, 2020: The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA, P.L. 116-127) passed the Senate with Senator Manchin's support providing extended authorities for USDA to provide more child nutrition waivers that would allow our schools to have much needed flexibility to continue providing meals to students during these school closures for federal reimbursement.

March 30, 2020: Senator Manchin worked with USDA to extend and provide further waivers for the WV Department of Education, and nationally, that allowed school systems to continue having much needed meal service flexibilities during the continued school closures.

April 23, 2020: Senator Manchin sent a letter to Secretary Perdue expressing his support of West Virginia's application for the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) program and to advocate for an extension of the Meal Pattern Waiver. The P-EBT program was authorized by the FFCRA.

May 1, 2020: Senator Manchin and Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) wrote to USDA Secretary Perdue to express the importance of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) as a vital safety net for families struggling during these challenging times. In this letter, Senators Manchin and Collins strongly urged that the Secretary immediately suspend all rulemaking on the "Revisions to Categorical Eligibility in SNAP" proposed rule that would kick 25,000 West Virginia citizens off of SNAP in the middle of a pandemic.

May 5, 2020: USDA announced that West Virginia had been approved for P-EBT, which allowed families who qualified for free or reduced price school meals would have another avenue to access healthy, nutritious foods since schools had been closed since mid-March.

June 12, 2020: Senator Manchin led 22 of his colleagues in a letter to the Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, expressing how lack of access to healthy, affordable foods is hurting low-income communities and communities of color during the pandemic. The letter went on to advocate for continued prioritization during the COVID-19 pandemic of

programs that reduce food deserts and support local and regional food development projects.

July 29, 2020: Senator Manchin joined a bipartisan group of 36 Senators to advocate for numerous Child Nutrition programming waiver extensions through the 2020-2021 school year. The Senators wrote in support of the School Nutrition Association's request for numerous waivers to remain in place for the upcoming school year so schools can best serve their students no matter what this school year brings.

August 21, 2020: Senator Manchin wrote once again in support of extending West Virginia's application for an extension on certain child nutrition waivers for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) through the 2020-2021 school year, so there would be no gap in meal service for West Virginia's children.

August 31, 2020: USDA announced that Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) programs will be allowed to continue operating through December 31, 2020 with multiple flexibilities which Senator Manchin has continuously advocated for.

September 30, 2020: The Senate passes a short-term funding bill, with Senator Manchin's support, that would fund the government through December 11, 2020. Included in this bill was an extension of Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue's authority to issue these nutrition waivers through September 30, 2021.

October 9, 2020: USDA announces the extension of 12 Child Nutrition program waivers through the end of the 2020-2021 school year allowing schools to continue providing meals with increased flexibilities.