

January 10, 2023
Re: Support for HF 5

Dear Chair Pryor and Members of the Committee:

My name is Hannah Lichtsinn. I am a pediatrician and internal medicine doctor in Minneapolis and a lifelong Minnesotan. I'm also a parent of two school-aged kids. I'm writing in support of HF5 because no child should ever go hungry in Minnesota, and especially not at school. Unfortunately, food insecurity is increasing across Minnesota and food shelves are predicted to see a record-high number of visits in 2023, exacerbated by the ending of COVID-19 relief measures, inflation, and rising housing costs. As a pediatrician, I know for certain that a lack of nutrition has the potential to physiologically change the body and cause negative life-long developmental, health, and mental health outcomes including diabetes, high blood pressure, anxiety, and depression. Hunger can also affect focus and a child's ability to show up in the classroom ready to learn, negatively impacting their academic opportunities and achievement. The initiative proposed is both vital and simple—to feed our children. Universally funded school meals would eliminate the shame many feel around an inability to afford breakfast and lunch and would allow all of our children to have a chance at health and learning.

Thank you for hearing this bill and I urge you to pass it. Minnesota's children and their families can't wait.

Sincerely,
Hannah Lichtsinn, MD