



Representative Hoa Nguyen  
Oregon House District 48

HB 3201 - CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM

**3/4 House Early Childhood and Human Services Committee**

Chair Hartman, Vice Chair Scharf, and Members of the Committee. I am State Representative Hoa Nguyen, and I represent House District 48, which includes outer Southeast Portland and North Clackamas County. I have been an educator for 20 years in Oregon, and strongly support HB 3201.

This bill has received strong bipartisan and bicameral support, reflecting the urgency and importance of investing in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). HB 3201 also aligns with a bill Congresswoman Bonamici is working on to reintroduce these provisions federally. This bill would strengthen the CACFP and ensure that all children in child care settings have access to nutritious meals.

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) is a vital federal initiative that reimburses child care providers for offering healthy meals and snacks to children in their care. Access to nutritious food is critical for early childhood development, yet 1 in 6 children in Oregon experience food insecurity, with children of color facing this challenge at 2-3 times higher rates. The CACFP not only promotes healthy nutrition but also enhances the quality of child care, stabilizes provider income, and supports local food systems. However, the federal reimbursement rate has not kept pace with rising food costs, forcing providers to either absorb the additional expense or pass it along to families.

As an educator, I see firsthand how nutrition impacts a child's ability to learn and grow. Research shows that children who have consistent access to healthy food perform better academically, exhibit stronger social-emotional skills, and have improved long-term health outcomes. The American Academy of Pediatrics highlights that food insecurity in early childhood is linked to developmental delays, lower math and reading

scores, and increased behavioral challenges. When children are hungry, they struggle to focus, engage, and reach their full potential in the classroom.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, key enhancements to CACFP—including a 10-cent increase in reimbursements and a waiver that allowed all home-based providers to receive the higher Tier 1 rate—expanded access to healthy meals and strengthened child care services. However, these provisions expired in 2023, leading to a drop in participation. In just six months, 82 fewer home-based providers enrolled in CACFP, limiting access to nutritious meals for thousands of children.

HB 3201 seeks to restore and build on these successful provisions by:

- Adding 10 cents to reimbursements for eligible meals and snacks.
- Ensuring Tier 2 home-based providers receive the same reimbursement as Tier 1 providers, eliminating geographic disparities.
- Allocating \$250,000 in one-time funds to create culturally specific meal options based on USDA guidelines.
- Maintaining \$660,000 in administrative support for home-based sponsoring organizations to sustain and expand CACFP participation.

Developing culturally relevant meal options is an essential part of this bill. Growing up, I never saw the meals I had at home reflected in the school meals provided to me. Ensuring that child care providers have access to recipes and meal options that reflect the diverse backgrounds of the children they serve helps create a sense of belonging, encourages healthy eating habits, and supports the overall well-being of our youngest learners.

This is not just about providing meals—it is about investing in the future of Oregon's children, our communities, and our economy. By ensuring that all children have access to nutritious food in their early years, we lay the foundation for a healthier, more equitable, and prosperous society.

I urge you to support HB 3201 and prioritize CACFP funding to ensure the well-being of our youngest Oregonians and the dedicated providers who care for them. Thank you for your time and consideration.