



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Majority of Senate supports fully funding State Food Assistance**

TUES., MARCH 19, 2013 – A majority of the Washington State Senate, twenty-five of 49 state senators, have voiced their support to restore food assistance to thousands of hungry children.

State Food Assistance was cut in half last year, taking food away from 14,000 children in immigrant families. If these 25 senators have their way, the program would be restored in the 2013-15 budget.

“The data is clear. Sound nutrition fuels academic achievement,” said Sen. Joe Fain, R-Auburn, who led the effort on the letter in the Senate Majority Caucus. “State Food Assistance is a smart way to make sure no child goes hungry.”

“A child who goes hungry will have a difficult time succeeding in school and in life,” said Sen. Andy Billig, D-Spokane, who has also advocated strongly for a restoration of State Food Assistance. “Food security is a real problem in every corner of Washington and we have a moral obligation to ensure no child goes hungry.”

State Food Assistance is Washington’s smart answer to childhood hunger. For more than 15 years, our state has strategically leveraged federal resources to make sure food stamps help families when times are tough. State Food Assistance also hastens our economic recovery; USDA analyses show that every \$5 spent in programs like Basic Food or State Food Assistance generates \$9 in economic activity.

But during the recession, state legislators cut State Food Assistance benefits in half. The cut went into effect in July 2012, hindering nearly 14,000 children’s access to healthy food. This cut hurt our economy, singled out children in immigrant families, and made it harder for kids to learn.

A diverse group of community and faith leaders, parents, and anti-hunger advocates has pressed for the restoration of these benefits back to prior levels. In response, Senators Fain and Billig worked hard to recruit others within their respective caucuses. Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe (D-Bothell) also took a leadership role as she walked the Senate floor with the letter in hand, urging colleagues to co-sign with her.

“Twenty-five Senators have taken a bold position,” says Jon Gould, deputy director of the Children’s Alliance. “The signers constitute a pro-child majority willing to take smart steps for a stronger future.”

The sign-on letter can be found online at: <http://www.childrensalliance.org/resource-center/letter-senators-support-state-food-assistance>

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*The Children’s Alliance is a statewide public policy advocacy organization that works at the state and federal levels to ensure that all children have what they need to thrive. More information: [www.childrensalliance.org](http://www.childrensalliance.org).*