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(Original Signature of Member)

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. _____

To require that school food authorities and local educational agencies not collect unpaid meal fees during the COVID–19 pandemic, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. OMAR introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee
on _____

A BILL

To require that school food authorities and local educational agencies not collect unpaid meal fees during the COVID–19 pandemic, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Suspend School Meal
5 Debt Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. SCHOOL MEAL DEBT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

7 (a) CANCELLATION OF MEAL DEBTS OWED AS OF
8 DATE OF ENACTMENT.—The Secretary shall reimburse

1 each school food authority and local educational agency
2 participating in the school lunch program under the Rich-
3 ard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C.
4 1751 et seq.) or the school breakfast program under sec-
5 tion 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 U.S.C.
6 1773) for the unpaid meal fees owed to such authority
7 or agency as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

8 (b) DEBT COLLECTION PROHIBITION DURING EMER-
9 GENCY PERIOD.—Notwithstanding any other provision of
10 law, the Secretary shall require that during the emergency
11 period each school food authority and local educational
12 agency described in subsection (a) may not collect unpaid
13 meal fees or use a debt collector (as such term is defined
14 in section 803 of the Consumer Credit Protection Act (15
15 U.S.C. 1692a)) to collect such unpaid meal fees.

16 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

17 (1) EMERGENCY PERIOD.—The term “emer-
18 gency period” means the period—

19 (A) beginning on the date of the enactment
20 of this section; and

21 (B) ending 30 days after date on which the
22 public health emergency declared by the Sec-
23 retary of Health and Human Services under
24 section 319 of the Public Health Service Act

1 (42 U.S.C. 247d) with respect to COVID–19 is
2 terminated under such section.

3 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
4 the Secretary of Agriculture.

5 (3) UNPAID MEAL FEES.—The term “unpaid
6 meal fees”—

7 (A) means outstanding fees owed by a
8 household to a local educational agency or
9 school food authority for lunches under the
10 Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act
11 (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.) or breakfasts under
12 section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966
13 (42 U.S.C. 1773); and

14 (B) includes late fees associated with the
15 outstanding fees described in subparagraph (A).