

October 27, 2000

Honorable Thad Cochran
United States Senate
326 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cochran:

I am writing to urge you to support updating the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to provide for proprietary child care centers' participation in the program if twenty-five percent of their enrolled children are eligible for free and reduced price meals. This update will help to ensure that low-income children enrolled in for-profit child care centers have access to the nutritional benefits of the CACFP.

Recognizing that a significant number of low-income children were enrolled in for-profit child care centers, Congress amended the CACFP statute in 1981 to allow for-profit providers that had twenty-five percent of their children receiving Title XX funds to participate in the program. Today, most states rely on CCDBG and TANF funds for child care and no longer use a significant amount of Title XX funds. In order to reflect this current reality and to provide the support that Congress originally intended for low-income children enrolled in proprietary centers, it is critical that the statute be amended. For-profit centers should be allowed to participate in CACFP if twenty-five percent of their enrolled children are eligible for free and reduced price meals.

Updating this provision in the Labor, Health, Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill would ensure that a significant number of low-income children enrolled in child care centers in Mississippi would be ensured access to both nutritious meals and supportive child care. It would bring approximately \$1.7 million to the child care centers in our state. Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:klr