

From the Office of the Democratic Leader
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TODAY'S MESSAGE

**House
Democratic
Leadership**

Communications

*Rep. Richard Durbin,
Rep. Kweisi Mfume
Vice Chairs*

Friday, February 24, 1995 GOP CUTS SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The Economic and Education Opportunities Committee voted yesterday along party lines -- 21-15 -- to end the school lunch program and replace it with lump sum grants to the states and reduced funding. The school lunch program has fed hundreds of millions of hungry children since 1946. More than 13 million American children rely on the School Nutrition program.

The program has traditionally had bipartisan support -- Republican President Richard Nixon said in support of expansion of school nutrition programs in 1969, "A child ill fed is duller in curiosity, lower in stamina, distracted from learning." (*New York Times*, 2/22/95)

REPUBLICAN CUTS ARE CALLOUS AND MEAN SPIRITED

These cuts were made, in a callous and mean-spirited approach, so that Republicans can carry through on their promise to deliver tax breaks for the wealthy.

This is precisely the kind of cut Democrats suspected the Republicans had in mind when we asked them to support an honesty in budgeting approach to the balanced budget amendment. What the Republicans didn't want anyone to know then was that in order to pay for their tax cuts for the rich, they would have to cut funding for programs like the school lunch program.

PHONY EXCUSE TO CUT BUREAUCRACY, NOT KIDS

Republicans may claim they want to cut bureaucracy and allow states and governors to design food assistance programs that meet their needs, but Democratic Governors said they were opposed to block-granting food and nutrition programs.

Governor Howard Dean (D-VT), chairman of the National Governors' Association called the Republican proposal "...the most despicable, mean-spirited legislative proposal I have seen in all my years of public service...the Speaker does not speak for all governors and, if he took the time to check, he would learn that this program has bipartisan support among the nation's governors."

Flexibility to help children affected by recession is eliminated, leaving states to bear the additional financial burden -- during the last recession, 1.2 million additional children received free school lunches.