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**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE**  
**BILL ANALYSIS**  
**53rd Legislature, 2nd Session, 2018**

<b>Bill Number</b>	<u>SM60</u>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<u>Kernan</u>
<b>Tracking Number</b>	<u>.209816.1</u>	<b>Committee Referrals</b>	<u>SRC/SEC</u>
<b>Short Title</b>	<u>Reduce School Food Waste</u>		
<b>Analyst</b>	<u>Force</u>	<b>Original Date</b>	<u>2/9/18</u>
		<b>Last Updated</b>	<u></u>

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**BILL SUMMARY**

Synopsis of Memorial

Senate Memorial 60 (SM60) requests LESC and the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee to review existing programs to reduce school food waste, and to study ways to create and expand policies allowing unused food to go to the benefit of hungry children.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

Legislative memorials do not carry appropriations.

**SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES**

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, approximately 13.1 million children in the country live in homes with insufficient food. The U.S. Census Bureau's most recent American Community Survey (2016) indicates the national average for persons under 18 living below the poverty line is 21.2 percent. In New Mexico, however, 29.8 percent of persons under 18 live below the poverty line, making New Mexico the state with the second-highest child poverty rate, after only Mississippi, at 31.5 percent. Further, poverty disproportionately affects minority families, and New Mexico has a minority-majority student population; of 333 thousand students, 61 percent are Hispanic, and 11 percent are Native American, with most qualifying for free and reduced price meals (FRPM). In fact, according to the Public Education Department (PED), of the 333,447 primary and secondary students in New Mexico, 244,186 of them, or 73 percent, qualify for FRPM. New Mexico participates in the National School Lunch Program and, since 2011, every school that has more than 85 percent of students qualifying in FRPM are required to offer breakfast as well.

According to "Food Waste in the National School Lunch Program 1978-2015: A Systematic Review," (Shanks, Banna, Serrano, *The Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, November 2017), most studies show more than 30 percent of food is wasted, with no studies reporting less than 5 percent waste. A study from the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* ("School Lunch Waste among Middle School Students," Cohen, Richardson, Austin, Economos, and Rimm, September 2012), students tend to consume less than the required or recommended

level of nutrients. Further, food waste for schools participating in the study amounted to approximately \$432 thousand per year, or 26.1 percent of the annual food budget; translated nationally, that amounts to more than \$1.2 billion in wasted food annually.

Studies have consistently shown that academic achievement and growth for hungry children lags behind children who do not go to school hungry. According to the Institute of Child Nutrition, nutrition, with genes, and the environment, are the three most important factors impacting cognitive development. The effects of undernutrition can begin during pregnancy, and the negative effects on brain development in utero and in early childhood can be permanent and irreversible. Hungry children have lower achievement scores, and are more likely to be tardy, miss school, and be retained. Breakfast in particular is important; students who participate in school breakfast programs tend to have better concentration, alertness, comprehension, learning, memory than children who do not.

## **RELATED BILLS**

HB62, NM-Grown Produce in School Meals, which appropriates \$400 thousand to PED for the purchase of fresh produce grown in New Mexico for public schools and juvenile detention centers. Identical to SB106.

HB136, Childhood Poverty Awareness Training Act, which requires charter schools and local school districts to ensure their employees attend initial and annual training on childhood poverty awareness.

HM55, Reduce School Food Waste, identical to SM60.

SB106, NM-Grown Produce in School Meals, identical to HB62.

SJM16, PED to Study School Meal Funding, which requests PED to identify the availability of additional federal programs to improve New Mexico school meals, student health, program funding, and training.

## **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- LESC Files

**RKF/rab**