

An Act to Promote Student Nutrition

Senate 2390 / House 4422, May 15, 2018

Dear Chairwoman Chang-Diang and Pisch:

My name is Wendy Timmons. Our family in Uxbridge grew up out on a farm with very little for speaking of – We didn't have much food on the table or electricity. My grandfather raised pigs and would get expired items from grocery stores for them, except that we would eat it instead.

Because of this destitute situation, I began working in restaurants then hotels which then started my culinary career. I became a sous chef and then eventually a chef – Long story short, four children later and a military husband, I needed to work local and during the school day. I found that job working in the Northbridge Middle School cafeteria.

I was there for nearly four years. I took an investment in our union, became a steward, and then was elected as our local secretary. AFSCME Council 93 decided to take chance with me, and so I was hired as staff rep. This changed my life.

Being a cafeteria worker changed my view of food. It brought me back to what my life was growing up on that farm. The students I served needed my smiling face and a nutritious meal. We were instructed to never discuss a student's account with them, yet I was forced to serve them a cold cheese sandwich if they were over their \$11.00 limit. The student would go through the service line, get their meal and proceed to the register. They would punch their student number in and then at that point if they were over the available limit set by the Administration, then their meal was taken and - to be discrete as possible - hold my hand up in the shape of a "C" to indicate to the servers to prepare a cheese sandwich. The meal that was taken would be discarded as it is not allowed to be reserved to another student per health regulations.

There is no discreet way to take a student's meal and exchange it for a cheese sandwich. I have had students start crying, begging and walk-off without a meal. A lot of the staff, including myself would pay for meals. A "Go Fund Me" page has even set up so that this doesn't happen again, but all though it is a valiant effort, it is far from sustainable.

I am an advocate for the cafeteria staff members. They are forced to follow policies that are demeaning and have proven to be ineffective. They should not have to "Police" the student's accounts and be the "Judge" of the cheese sandwiches.

In essence, the change needs to be here in this State House. Wouldn't it be a pivotal turn in history to completely abolish hunger? We can start with our schools. With all that I am, I ask for your consideration in passing this bill, for our students, our workers and our families.

Thank you –

Wendy Timmons
AFSCME – Council 93
Staff Rep / Western, MA

~ In Not to Promote Student Nutrition
Senate 2390/ House 4422

May 15, 2018

Dear Chairman Chang-Diaz and Pisch:

My name is Wendy Timmons. Our family in Milbridge grew up out on a farm with very little to speak of - We didn't have much food on the table or electricity. My Grandfather raised pigs and would get expired items from grocery stores for them, except that we would eat it instead -

Because of this destitute situation, I began working in restaurants, then hotels which then started my culinary career. I became a Sous Chef and then eventually a Chef - Long story short, four children later and a Military husband, I needed to work local and during the school day. I found that job working in the Northbridge Middle School cafeteria.

I was there for nearly four years. I took an interest in our Union, became a Steward, and then was elected as our Local Secretary. AFSCME Council 93 decided to take a chance with me, and so I was hired as a Staff Rep. This has changed my life.

Being a Cafeteria worker changed my view of food. It brought me back to what my life was growing up on that farm. The students I served needed my smiling face, and a nutritious meal. We were instructed to never discuss a student's account with them, yet was

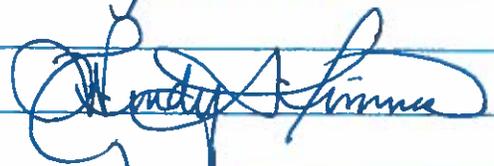
forced to serve them a cold cheese sandwich if they were over their \$11.00 limit. The student would go thru the service line, get their meal and proceed to the registrar. They would punch their student number in and then at that point if they were over the allowable limit set by the Administration, then their meal was taken and (to be discrete) as possible, hold my hand up in the shape of a "C" to indicate to the servers to prepare a cheese sandwich. The student would then be instructed to return to the service line and receive the cheese sandwich. The meal that was taken would then be discarded as it is not allowed to be re-served to another student per health regulations.

There is no discreet way to take a student's meal and exchange it for a cheese sandwich. I have had students start crying, begging and walk-off without a meal. A lot of the staff, including myself would pay for meals. A "Go Fund Me" page has even been set up so that this doesn't happen again, but although it is a valiant effort, it is far from sustainable.

I am an advocate for the cafeteria staff members. They are forced to follow policies that are demeaning and have proven to be ineffective. They should not have to "police" the student's accounts and be the "Judge" of Cheese Sandwiches.

In essence, the change needs to be here, In this State House. Wouldn't it be a pivotal turn in history to completely abolish hunger? We can start with our schools. With all that I am, I ask for your consideration in passing this bill, for our students, our workers and our families.

Thank You —



Wendy A. Timmons
AFSCME - Council 93
Staff Rep Western, MA
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