



HB 643 WILL HELP KIDS EAT RIGHT DURING SUMMER

House Bill (HB) 643 would ensure more children in low-income neighborhoods have access to nutritious meals during the summer. This legislation by State Representative Eddie Rodriguez would increase the number of school districts subject to a state law requiring districts in low-income communities to operate the program. The Summer Food Program provides over \$52 million in federal funds each year to low-income communities in Texas to help serve nutritious meals to children in safe, enriching environments. The Summer Food Program is critical in a state like Texas, where too many children are in poor nutritional health. Texas has one of the largest School Lunch Programs in the nation, serving meals to over 2.8 million low-income children every day. The Summer Food Program is intended to serve the same population, yet it reaches only a fraction of the low-income children who eat lunch during the school year. The primary barrier is a lack of sponsors.

Current Summer Food Statute

In 1997, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 714 mandating school districts in which 60 percent or more of their students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch to sponsor the Summer Food Program. School districts have the option to request a waiver of the requirement if they can demonstrate a barrier to participation, including the availability of another provider, transportation barriers, fewer than 100 students eligible, inadequate facilities, or other extenuating circumstances.

- In 2010, 407 school districts were subject to the requirement, and the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) waived the requirement for 95 of them.
- Transportation cost is the single largest obstacle keeping school districts from participating, representing 53 percent of the waivers.

Since SB 714, the number of summer food sponsors in Texas has increased 60 percent, quadrupling the number of children who have access to nutritious meals during the summer. In 2010, Texas received \$52 million in federal funds to serve 21 million meals to more than 450,000 children.

Despite this progress, only one-in-six children (16 percent) who qualify for free or reduced price school meals received a lunch through the Summer Food Program in 2010.

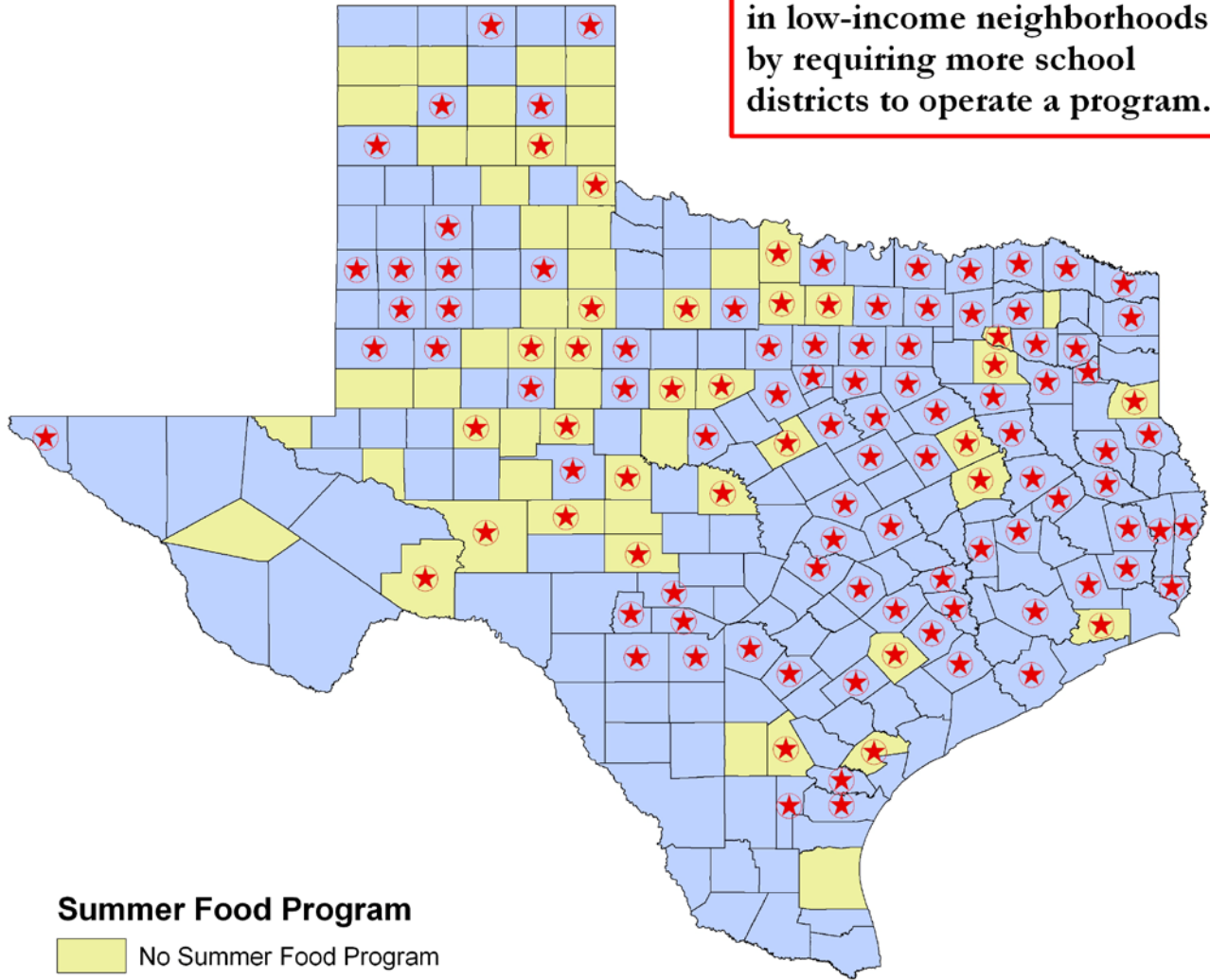
HB 643

- Expands the mandate to cover school districts in which 50 or more of their students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
 - Maintains waiver criteria.
 - Requires the board of trustees to approve a school district's request for a waiver before it can be granted by TDA.
- This legislation would increase the number of districts required to operate a program by 60 percent, or 246 districts. However, 73 of these districts already sponsor the summer program.
 - Maximizing federal funding for nutrition assistance is critical as lawmakers contemplate devastating cuts to other essential services.

The following map shows the potential increase in summer food sites under HB 643. For summer program data by county, see <http://www.cphp.org/research.php?aid=1069>

HB 643/SB 89 Would Expand Summer Food Programs for Needy Children in 116 Counties

HB 643/SB 89 would increase the number of summer food programs in low-income neighborhoods by requiring more school districts to operate a program.



Summer Food Program

- No Summer Food Program
- One or More Summer Food Programs

★ **Number of summer food sites would increase under HB643/SB 89**

Source: Texas Department of Agriculture. Summer program data is the average daily participation for summer 2010.