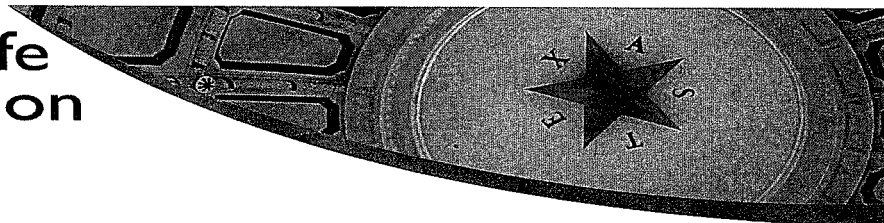


Christian Life Commission



Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 89 Senate Education Committee April 14, 2011

The Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission supports SB 89 by Lucio. The Christian Life Commission is the ethics and public policy division of the Texas Baptist Convention, a convention with over 5600 member congregations. These congregations consist of families of all types who are active citizens in their communities. We would like to express our support of SB 89 because we recognize the importance of providing nutritious meals to children in low-income families during the summer months. One in four Texas children does not have enough food to eat each day. Summer Nutrition Programs, implemented by the state and paid for by federal reimbursement funds, help assure that Texas children have nutritious meals to eat during the summer months when they otherwise might go hungry.

Texas Baptists are committed to partnering with the Texas Department of Agriculture to help provide support and outreach for summer food programs. In fact, a new Texas Baptist position has been filled in Dallas to partner with the North Texas Food Bank to provide more church sites in the area. The Texas Hunger Initiative, a program through the Baylor University School of Social Work, has led an effort to end hunger in Texas by 2015, beginning with local Food Planning Associations that have led outreach efforts across the state and have helped implement summer food programs in their communities.

Though schools are oftentimes the best locations to act as sites for summer nutrition programs, we recognize that the need for the program is met with financial constraints on school districts this year. For times like this when help is necessary, non-profit organizations and groups in communities across the state are dedicated to providing sites, or providing volunteers to staff sites that already exist.

Texas Baptist churches from around the state have operated summer food sites as a way to ensure children have nutritious meals to eat in the months they are not in school. Last summer in San Antonio, 22 congregations served 7,132 lunches and 2,684 breakfasts to children in their area. In Dallas, multiple Korean churches worked in coalition with the Dallas Baptist Association to provide meals to children in multi-family housing projects.

Hunger does not take a summer vacation. Now is the time to pass a bill that would ensure that our communities' children have enough to eat during the summer months.

We are grateful that Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples has made child nutrition a priority for the TDA, and we look forward to partnering with the Department in the future.