

From: [Arellano, Joey](mailto:Arellano_Joey)
To: [Press](#)
Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Shameful: Florida Only State Not Taking Federal Relief for Hungry Kids
Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021 5:09:58 PM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Sept. 9, 2021

CONTACT

Joey Arellano
Deputy Communications Director
House Democratic Office
joey.arellano@myfloridahouse.gov
850-717-4943

Shameful: Florida House Democrats React to Florida Being Only State Not Taking Federal Relief for Hungry Kids

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – With \$820 million in food aid still available for the more than 2 million Florida children from low-income families, Florida House Democrats issued the following statements in response to the Governor choosing not to participate in the Coronavirus P-EBT federal program that helps feed children from low-income families. It is important to note that Florida is the *only state* in the country that has not requested these relief funds.

“I am disappointed the Governor is stubbornly refusing to accept desperately needed resources to help families can have access to food during an ongoing pandemic to feed their children. There are families who will be forced to miss payments for household expenses to feed their kids without this aid. This is not a partisan issue. It’s about being a leader for all Floridians and making an investment in the health and wellbeing of children, our communities, and the State. Florida deserves better,” said **Representative Ramon Alexander (D-Tallahassee)**.

“With Florida’s unemployment rates still rising, we have to do everything we can to ensure our state’s vulnerable kids are not going to bed hungry,” said **Representative Nicholas X. Duran (D-Miami)**. “The Governor likes to spend federal dollars sent to Florida by President Biden and the American Rescue Plan, so why not request the \$820 million and make sure we are getting Florida’s children fed?”

“Feeding our children and ensuring their wellbeing should be one of our top priorities as policymakers. I urge the State of Florida to participate in the Coronavirus Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer program and put our children first. A year and a half of a global pandemic has been difficult on all of us, but especially children. With many students already falling behind, living in food deserts or in underserved communities, we cannot afford to let this opportunity to improve lives pass by,” stressed **Representative Susan L. Valdés (D-Tampa)**.

“Food insecurity is a problem in our state and no child should ever go to bed hungry. As a former teacher, I have seen children come to school hungry; I’ve even taken money out of my own pocket to help families. Teachers worry about their students getting enough food when they go home on weekends and breaks. Families need this help. While we have returned to in person schooling, students are being quarantined across the state and do not

have access to food at home. This program would make all the difference to Florida's hungry children," said **Representative Robin Bartleman (D-Weston)**.

"It is truly appalling that Florida is not taking advantage of a program that will help some of the most vulnerable children in the State. It is incomprehensible and it is time we join the rest of the nation in allowing Floridians to benefit from this program," said **Representative Marie P. Woodson (D-Hollywood)**.

###