

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee,

My name is Ashley Dodson, and I am the founder of Anchored Perspectives, writing to you on behalf of the NAACP in strong support of Assembly Bill 268. This bill would provide universal free breakfast and lunch for all Nevada pupils, ensuring that every child has access to the nutrition they need to thrive academically, physically, and mentally.

As a child, free breakfast and lunch at school were essential. My sister and I, along with many of our classmates and friends, received these meals because our mothers' incomes were limited, and school meals provided the nourishment needed to focus and learn. These programs made a significant impact on our ability to engage in school and grow in a healthy way.

Now, as a mother of five children in CCSD, managing a tight budget, I see firsthand how important these meals remain. With rising costs of living, families are prioritizing expenses carefully, and ensuring children have nutritious meals at school provides vital support. Many students rely on these meals not just for nourishment but also for their cognitive development, emotional well-being, and overall success in the classroom.

For some children, these school meals are the only consistent source of food they receive. This bill ensures that all students have access to the nutrition they need, without financial barriers or stigma. Proper nutrition enhances focus, academic performance, and mental health—key components of a child's development and success.

AB 268 is an investment in our children's future, our education system, and the overall well-being of Nevada families. By ensuring all students receive free meals, we create a supportive learning environment where no child is left behind due to circumstances beyond their control.

On behalf of the NAACP and the many families who benefit from these programs, I urge this committee to pass AB 268. Ensuring that children have access to proper nutrition is a fundamental responsibility, and this bill takes an important step toward achieving that goal.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and consideration of this critical issue.

In solidarity,

Ashley Dodson, LMSW

Anchored Perspectives

On behalf of NAACP