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SENATE BILL NO. 42

Offered January 14, 2026

Prefiled November 22, 2025

A BILL to amend and reenact § 22.1-79.7 of the Code of Virginia, relating to school boards; powers and duties; school meal policies; payment of school meal debt.

 Patron—Roem

 Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 22.1-79.7 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 22.1-79.7. School meal policies; donations.**

A. Each local school board shall adopt policies that:

1. Prohibit school board employees from requiring a student who cannot pay for a meal at school or who owes a school meal debt to throw away or discard a meal after it has been served to him, do chores or other work to pay for such meals, or wear a wristband or hand stamp;

2. Require school board employees to direct any communication relating to a school meal debt to the student's parent. Such policy may permit such communication to be made by a letter addressed to the parent to be sent home with the student;

3. Prohibit the school board from filing a lawsuit against a student or the student's parent because the student cannot pay for a meal at school or owes a school meal debt; ~~and~~

4. Prohibit the school board or any school board employee from denying a student the opportunity to participate in any extracurricular school activity because the student cannot pay for a meal at school or owes a school meal debt; *and*

5. *Require the school board to pay for any unpaid school meal balances on the nonprofit school food service account of each public elementary or secondary school in the school division resulting from uncollectable school meal debts on any student account at the end of the school year using any appropriated nonfederal funds in accordance with subsection C.*

B. Any school board may solicit and receive any donation or other funds for the purpose of eliminating or offsetting any school meal debt at any time and shall use any such funds solely for such purpose.

C. *At the end of each school year, each school board shall pay for the total unpaid school meal balance on the nonprofit school food service account of each public elementary or secondary school in the school division resulting from uncollectable school meal debts on any student account using any appropriated nonfederal funds, including any funds received pursuant to subsection B or funds received from state, local, or any other nonfederal sources. However, no school board shall require any public elementary or secondary school in the school division to pay for or provide any funding for the payment of such school's unpaid school meal balance.*

INTRODUCED

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