



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 643

February Session, 2026

Substitute House Bill No. 5537

House of Representatives, April 15, 2026

The Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding reported through REP. HORN of the 64th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY WAYS TO FUND A UNIVERSAL FREE SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a working
2 group to study ways to fund a universal free school meals program that
3 would assist public schools to provide free breakfasts and lunches to all
4 public school students. The study shall examine (1) the amount of
5 funding projected to be required for such program, (2) possible sources
6 for funding, including, but not limited to, the imposition of a dedicated
7 tax or fee, (3) the parameters for the establishment of such program and
8 for disbursement of funds, and (4) any other matters relevant to the
9 establishment or funding of such program.

10 (b) The working group shall consist of (1) the chairpersons of the joint
11 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
12 matters relating to finance, revenue and bonding, education, children
13 and public health, (2) representatives of public schools and local or

14 regional boards of education, (3) public health or nutrition experts, and
 15 (4) any other individuals or entities the chairpersons deem desirable or
 16 necessary to carry out the provisions of this section. The members set
 17 forth in subdivisions (2) to (4), inclusive, of this subsection shall be
 18 appointed by the chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the
 19 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance,
 20 revenue and bonding, not later than thirty days after the effective date
 21 of this section.

22 (c) The chairpersons of the joint standing committee of the General
 23 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance, revenue and
 24 bonding shall serve as the chairpersons of the working group and shall
 25 schedule the first meeting of the working group, which shall be held not
 26 later than sixty days after the effective date of this section.

27 (d) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the
 28 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to finance,
 29 revenue and bonding shall serve as administrative staff of the working
 30 group.

31 (e) Not later than January 1, 2027, the working group shall submit a
 32 report on its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly,
 33 in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general statutes.
 34 The working group shall terminate on the date that it submits such
 35 report or January 1, 2027, whichever is later.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

FIN *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill has no fiscal impact by establishing a working group to study ways to fund a universal free school meals program. It is anticipated that members of the working group have the expertise or will consult with experts as needed to complete the study within existing resources.

The Out Years

State Impact: None

Municipal Impact: None



OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5537

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP TO STUDY WAYS TO FUND A UNIVERSAL FREE SCHOOL MEALS PROGRAM.

SUMMARY

The Office of Legislative Research does not analyze Special Acts.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 36 Nay 18 (03/30/2026)