



General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 5537

February Session, 2026



**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.*