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Wise Investment in our Children (WIC) Act

Extend Eligibility for Children to Age 6

WIC provides nutrition assistance to children up to age five at which point many enter public school where they may qualify for school breakfast and lunch programs that continue to supplement their intake of healthy food choices. However, a child's birth date impacts their eligibility to enter school. A significant number of children remain ineligible well past their fifth birthday – sometimes for as much as a year. Continuing WIC nutrition services assures a continued strong health and nutrition foundation preparing children for school entrance, getting them ready to learn, reducing childhood obesity and other chronic diseases. The WIC Act would allow States to extend eligibility for children to age six.

Extend Certification Periods for Infants

According to medical experts, the first two years of life are a key timeframe to invest in the health of a child. WIC certification procedures require WIC applicants to present documentation of family income for those individuals who are not certified from other programs (like Medicaid), present proof of residency and physically present themselves at certification, for which the appointment can take 2-3 hours. By allowing WIC certification for infants for up to two years (instead of the current one year), Congress has the opportunity to eliminate duplicative paperwork and focus WIC on health, nutrition, breastfeeding, immunization, and pediatric referral services that will make a significant difference in the lives of lower income infants and young children. This change will allow better nutrition services coordination, increase opportunities for nutrition intervention, assure improved breastfeeding duration, improve coordination with healthcare services, reduce duplicative and invasive blood work for infants and toddlers, provide for more counseling time and time with high-risk infants and toddlers, and streamline and reduce paperwork for clients, clinics, and health care providers. The WIC Act would give States the option to certify infants for two years.