



S. 121, Protecting Children with Food Allergies Act Overview

Background: On January 26, 2023, Sen. Richard J. Durbin (D-IL) and Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) introduced S. 121, [Protecting Children with Food Allergies Act](#), the culmination of a two-year effort by FARE to strengthen food allergy training for public school food service employees and provide informational material about food allergies and the importance of early introduction of allergens to new mothers and caregivers participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). WIC serves approximately 57% of the eligible population and [almost half of new infants in the U.S.](#)

As you may be aware, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) found that over the past 20 years, the rates of children with food allergies has more than doubled and for children with a peanut or tree nut allergy, it has tripled. Life-threatening food allergies and the risk of fatal anaphylaxis are growing at an even faster rate among [Black and Asian-American children](#).

While food allergies are on the rise nationally, a [2020 study](#) found that children on Medicaid were less than one-tenth as likely as children on private health insurance to be diagnosed with a food allergy. As you might imagine, with more than 42 million children in [America uninsured](#) or on [Medicaid/CHIP](#), the combination of underdiagnosis coupled with the dramatic increase in food allergy prevalence makes our public schools the site of the majority of our children's anaphylactic attacks as a [2016 NIH study](#) reported with 25% of all attacks occurring in children with "no known food allergies."

In addition, S. 121 also provides additional educational materials on food allergies to front-line WIC workers to help their clients recognize and take steps to prevent their babies from developing food allergies later in life. This bill reinforces the recommendation made by the [2020-25 U.S. Dietary Guidelines](#) that also called for the early introduction of known allergens as a way to prevent food allergies.

FARE is proud to endorse S. 121. The legislation is also backed by the National WIC Association and by all national food allergy organizations.

Our ask in the U.S. Senate: If you are an Illinois resident, please thank Senators Durbin and Duckworth for their support. For all other U.S. Senators, please ask them to cosponsor S. 121.

Our ask in the U.S. House: Our goal in the House is to identify and recruit members interested in introducing and cosponsoring the House version of S. 121. Ideally, House members belonging to the Education and Workforce Committee are in the best possible position to advance this bill though non-committee members can also introduce the legislation.