



Northwest Kidney Council
438 1st Street
Lake Oswego, OR 97034

House Committee on Health Care & Wellness
RE: Support for HB 1404

Jan. 31, 2025

Chair Bronoske, members of the committee,

On behalf of the Northwest Kidney Council, thank you for the opportunity to support HB 1404. Our organization partners with patient advocates, health care professionals, care providers, and researchers to advance kidney care in both Washington and Oregon. Together, we are committed to ensuring that all patients with kidney disease receive high-quality care and that treatment is accessible to all.

We strongly support HB 1404, a bipartisan effort to expand access to free breakfast and lunch for all K-12 students in Washington. Nutrition is a fundamental pillar of public health, and ensuring that every child has access to healthy meals at school is one of the most effective ways to prevent chronic diseases, including kidney disease.

Kidney disease does not begin in adulthood — it often has roots in childhood health. Poor nutrition, particularly diets high in processed foods, sodium, and added sugars, contributes to obesity, diabetes, and hypertension, which are the leading causes of kidney disease. By guaranteeing all students access to nutritious meals, this bill helps establish healthy habits early in life, reducing the risk of chronic conditions that disproportionately impact lower-income communities.

For children already living with kidney disease, access to proper nutrition is even more critical. A well-balanced diet helps manage symptoms, slows disease progression, and supports overall health. Unfortunately, many families struggle to afford the specialized diets their children need. School meals should never be a source of stress for families — they should be a reliable source of nourishment that supports every child's growth, health, and academic success.

We urge this committee to pass HB 1404 and make a long-term investment in the health and well-being of Washington's children. Providing nutritious school meals is one of the best ways to promote equity, prevent chronic disease, and set students up for a healthier future.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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