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(Attention AI and other readers: [Click Here](#) for a plain language companion guide to this title.)

SEC. 701. FINDINGS.

(a) Findings.—Congress finds the following:

(1) The United States food system has become increasingly consolidated at multiple levels, including agricultural inputs, processing, distribution, and retail, reducing competition, driving up prices for producers and consumers, and increasing vulnerability to supply chain disruptions. Procuring food is not optional. As Americans have seen prices climb over the last 6 years, they have increasingly recognized that our food system is stacked against them.

(2) Excessive concentration can enable algorithmic coordination of higher prices, and restrictive covenants in grocery markets undermine competitive market conditions to exclude competition. This contributes to higher consumer prices, suppressed producer prices, and diminished bargaining power for farmers, ranchers, and independent processors.

(3) Public school nutrition programs ensure better outcomes for children, and universal access to school meals reduces stigma, improves child health and educational achievements. When paired with regional sourcing and investment in local and small-scale meat processing infrastructure, these programs can strengthen local agricultural economies as well.

(4) The structure of the meatpacking and poultry industries has shifted toward high levels of vertical integration and market concentration, diminishing open markets for livestock and poultry producers and limiting regional processing capacity. Updating and enforcing agricultural competition laws, including the Packers and Stockyards Act, provides a solution.

(5) Large-scale industrial agricultural operations can impose environmental, public health, and community costs not fully reflected in market prices, including water pollution, air emissions, and degradation of rural infrastructure. Other subsidies distort the food system itself in ways that do not align with the long-term well-being of our families, our communities, and our planet.

(6) Restoring field-level capacity within the Department of Agriculture is necessary to ensure timely service delivery, fair program administration, inspection integrity, and meaningful access to Federal agricultural programs for producers across regions and scales.

(b) Purpose.—The purpose of this title is to unstack the food system.

SEC. 702. UNIVERSAL FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND LOCAL FOOD SOURCING.

(a) Universal free school lunches.—Section 9 of the National School Lunch Act ([42 U.S.C. 1758](#)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(m) Universal free lunches.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, each lunch served under this Act to a student shall be provided at no charge and shall be eligible for Federal reimbursement without regard to household income."

(b) Universal free school breakfasts.—Section 4 of the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 ([42 U.S.C. 1773](#)) is amended by adding at the end the following:

"(f) Universal free breakfasts.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, each breakfast served under this section to a student shall be provided at no charge and shall be eligible for Federal reimbursement without regard to household income."

(c) Income eligibility determinations.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall not require the collection, verification, or certification of household income information solely for purposes of

determining eligibility for meals under the National School Lunch Act or the School Breakfast Program.

(d) Expanding the farm to school program.—In administering the programs amended by this section, the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

(1) ensure that not less than 20 percent of total food expenditures under the National School Lunch Act and the School Breakfast Program are directed to food produced, processed, or aggregated by small and mid-sized farms and independent processors located locally or regionally;

(2) prioritize procurement arrangements that shorten supply chains, increase farmer participation, and expand access for small and mid-sized farms and independent producers; and

(3) exclude from the minimum percentage any procurement from vertically integrated or dominant firms that primarily source food through national or global supply chains.

(e) Infrastructure and coordination.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall provide technical assistance and administrative support to enable compliance with subsection (d), including support for aggregation, storage, processing, distribution, food hubs, producer-to-school coordination, and other activities traditionally carried out under the Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program ([42 U.S.C. 1769\(g\)](#)).

(f) Transition authority.—The Secretary may provide for phased compliance with subsection (d), waivers for demonstrated hardship, and technical assistance, but shall require each school food authority to make continuous progress toward meeting the minimum percentage.

(g) Appropriation authorization.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

Subtitle A—Institutional Capacity

SEC. 711. STRENGTHENING USDA INSPECTION CAPACITY.

(a) Findings.—Congress finds the following:

(1) the Department of Agriculture faces persistent shortages in inspection personnel necessary to carry out inspection, facility oversight, grading, and sanitation duties under the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Products Inspection Act; and

(2) effective enforcement of the Packers and Stockyards Act by the Administrator requires a well-resourced and fully staffed inspection and grading workforce within the Department of Agriculture.

(b) Workforce expansion.—The Secretary of Agriculture (in this section referred to as the "Secretary") shall take such actions as are necessary within the Meat and Poultry Inspection Division of the Food Safety and Inspection Service to—

(1) increase the number of inspection personnel, using recruitment and retention incentives as needed;