

Sound Bites

Pols partner to make sure kids get breakfast

WASHINGTON — Looking to solve the problem of hunger and poor nutrition in schools, two former presidential candidates on opposite sides of the political aisle have banded together in support of a new program designed to ensure breakfast to children in need.

Former Sens. George McGovern, D-S.D., and Bob Dole, R-Kan., recently launched Got Breakfast, a promotional campaign intended to improve participation in the nation's school breakfast program. McGovern and Dole are spearheading the Got Breakfast campaign after the Food Research and Action Center, a nonprofit research and public policy group specializing in hunger relief, released a report stating that several states had failed to use \$382 million in federal funding to provide qualifying children with free or reduced-price meals.

"Millions of children who qualify for breakfast at school do not receive it," McGovern said. "Each morning, only 9 million children get breakfast at school out of the 29 million who are eligible. The Got Breakfast campaign aims to turn a healthy breakfast for every child from a dream into a reality."

Dole said: "Many children who don't get breakfast at school don't get breakfast at home either. The federal government already has appropriated the money for breakfast at school, but not enough schools take advantage of it."

Dole and McGovern unveiled the program at a reception in Washington, D.C., along with supporters such as Patricia Nicklin of Share

Our Strength, Max Finberg of the Alliance to End Hunger, Camellia Patey of the National Dairy Council and Gary Davis of East Side Entrees. Also on hand were Kate Coler of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, FRAC's James Weill, School Nutrition Association president Ruth Jonen and Tim Mertz of the Henrico, Va., public schools system.

East Side Entrees, a partner of the Got Breakfast campaign, said it would donate a portion of the proceeds from each meal that

goes to children in severe need to SOS and other nonprofit organizations in an effort to end childhood hunger in the United States over the next 20 years. This year the donations are expected to reach a total of \$1 million.

"If we do our jobs right, Got Breakfast will have an enormous impact on helping hungry chil-

dren all over the country get the nutrition they need to learn, grow and thrive," said Nicklin, SOS' managing director. "By next year's holiday season, we'll have made progress toward our goal of creating the first hunger-free generation."

McGovern and Dole said that the campaign also would feature a contest in which children across the country would be asked to write a short composition on why breakfast is the most important meal of the day and why getting it at school is important. The four winners of the contest would receive new laptop computers and be on posters distributed to schools nationwide.

— Elissa Elan



Bob Dole, left, and George McGovern

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