As part of Senate Majority Leader Mark Norris' initiative as CSG Chairman, the Tennessee Nutrition Caucus was launched during Ag Day on the Hill late last month. “This is a bi-partisan team of state legislators who understand that one’s quality of life depends on the necessities of life,” said Norris. Part of the impetus to create the caucus is the current status of Tennessee's children and overall population. According to Feeding America, 25.1% of Tennessee's children and 17.6% of the state's general population are unaware of where they will find their next meal.

During the event, Chairman Norris had several of his legislative colleagues join him for this important announcement as they join together to focus on hunger relief. Senators Steven Dickerson and Dolores Gresham and Representatives Curtis Halford, Jason Powell and Joe Towns joined Norris to show their support.

Sen. Dickerson remarked, “As one of the three practicing physicians in the Senate, I have a unique opportunity to see the ravaging effect of poor nutrition on a daily basis, and I am excited to work toward implementing good public policy based on my experience. There’s much to be done.”

A variety of community-based partners have signed on to actively participate in caucus activities. Organizations already working on the fight to end hunger and malnutrition, such as the Tennessee Farm Bureau, YMCA, Beveral Association of Tennessee, Tennessee Wildlife Federation, Feeding America, Tennessee Academy of Nutrition and Diabetes and the University of Tennessee Center for Health Science, have pledged their engagement.

“Our long-term goal is to provide an appropriate forum to find solutions to malnutrition – legislative, public, private and volunteer – and put them to work like reducing unemployment through healthier lifestyles, eliminating food deserts, encouraging urban gardening, harvests for the hungry and community education events. These are just a few examples of what we can do together to make a meaningful difference in the lives of all Tennesseans,” said Norris.