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Japan's opposition parties introduce bill to provide free school meals

30 December 2024 | News

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Japanâ??s three opposition parties, including the Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDP), have jointly submitted a bill on Monday to make school lunches free at public elementary and junior high schools. The bill, which aims to revise the school lunch program law, was presented to the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of parliament, by the CDP, Nippon Ishin no Kai (Japan Innovation Party), and the Democratic Party for the People.

According to Jiji Press, the proposed measure is expected to cost around 490 billion yen annually. The three parties hope to include the necessary funding in the draft budget for fiscal year 2025, to implement the measure in April 2025.

CDP Executive Deputy President Akira Nagatsuma stated to reporters, "We hope to bring the opposition parties together and present this bill to the ruling coalition." Hitoshi Aoyagi, the policy head of Nippon Ishin, remarked that a united effort by the opposition on issues like free school lunches will encourage the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and its coalition partner, Komeito, to seriously consider the proposal.