

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

We write to urge the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to permanently eliminate the grain and protein limits for meals provided at our nation's schools. There is undoubtedly an obesity problem in our nation, but in order to combat this epidemic, we must provide our local school nutritionists the flexibility they need to achieve our national objective of improved nutrition, not limit their ability to provide nutritious and filling meals to our children.

In implementing provisions of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which was passed by the 111th Congress, the USDA issued new nutrition requirements for meals served through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Discussions with local school officials, meal providers and nutrition experts have illuminated the challenges in meeting the new strict calorie requirements, while also complying with the grain and protein limitations. These limits make it difficult for school nutritionists to plan meals children will actually eat and which will fulfill their unique, individual nutritional needs. Winning the fight against child obesity must not result in losing the fight against child hunger.

We have introduced the School Nutrition Flexibility Act (H.R. 1303) to permanently eliminate the protein and grain limits, and return the responsibility for updating school meal plans to school officials and their communities. The School Nutrition Flexibility Act has attracted bipartisan support from 45 cosponsors, representing a diverse range of urban, suburban, and rural communities from across the country.

We ask that the USDA consider our views and the needs of our nation's children by permanently eliminating the protein and grain limits on school meals.

Sincerely,



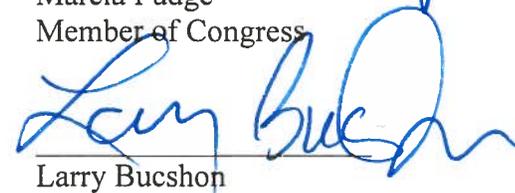
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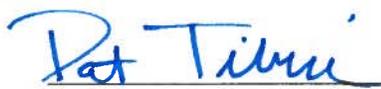

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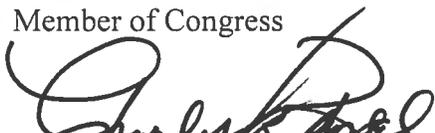

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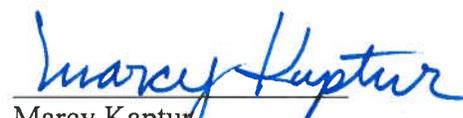

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Member of Congress


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Member of Congress

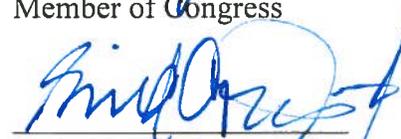

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