

June 21, 2017

Senator Susan Collins
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Lou Barletta
2049 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Heidi Heitkamp
502 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Mark DeSaulnier
115 Cannon Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Collins and Heitkamp and Congressmen Barletta and DeSaulnier:

We write to express our strong support for the **School Food Modernization Act** which gives school meal program staff the tools and resources they need to prepare wholesome, delicious meals that meet United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition standards. We appreciate your leadership in advancing this important legislation.

As the legislation you have sponsored recognizes, American schools are actively working to provide increasingly healthy and appealing meal offerings, but too many school kitchens were built decades ago without adequate capacity for procuring, storing, refrigerating, preparing and serving the foods they'd like to offer. Many schools need improved equipment or infrastructure for activities such as baking, cooling and scratch cooking using local ingredients. In addition, much like other educators, school nutrition professionals require on-going training and technical assistance to better serve students and run successful programs, but they often lack accessible, affordable professional development opportunities.

A recent survey by The Pew Charitable Trusts found that food service directors cited kitchen equipment (38 percent) as the most significant driver of financial concerns, followed by labor costs (33 percent). By comparison, food costs were the top financial concern for only 2 percent of directors. The School Food Modernization Act provides needed assistance to schools through loan guarantees for kitchen infrastructure and equipment upgrades, authorizes grants for small but critical equipment purchases, and supports innovative training opportunities to strengthen the school food service workforce. We know that American children spend more time in school than anywhere outside of their homes, and the choices they make during the school day can influence their health over a lifetime. It is vital to provide schools the help they need to provide healthy choices for all children.

We applaud your efforts on behalf of America's school children, and we look forward to working with you to help advance this important legislative initiative.

Sincerely yours,

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
Action for Healthy Kids
Alabama Action for Healthy Kids
American Academy of Pediatrics
SHAPE America
Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO)
American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
American Diabetes Association
American Heart Association
American Public Health Association

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
California Action for Healthy Kids
Public Health Advocates
California Food Policy Advocates
Campbell Soup Company
Center for Science in the Public Interest
Central Pennsylvania Food Bank
ChangeLab Solutions
Chef Ann Foundation
Maryland/DC/Virginia Action for Healthy Kids
Farm Sanctuary
First Focus Campaign for Children
Foodservice Consultants Society International - The Americas Division
The Food Trust
FoodCorps
Healthy Schools Campaign
Hunger-Free PA
Illinois Action for Healthy Kids
Indiana Action for Healthy Kids
ITW Food Equipment Group
Louisiana Action for Healthy Kids
Mars, Incorporated
Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids
National Action Against Obesity
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Education Association
National Farm to School Network
National PTA
Nestle USA
New York State Action for Healthy Kids
Pennsylvania Action for Healthy Kids
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Real Food For Kids
School Food Focus National Office
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
Texas Action for Healthy Kids
United Fresh Produce Association
West Virginia Action for Healthy Kids
Winston Industries
Wisconsin Action for Healthy Kids