

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