



May 28, 2013

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. George Miller
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and the Workforce
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Kline and Rep. Miller:

We are writing to endorse H.R. 1303 and ask the Committee to take up and report the bill as soon as possible. "The School Nutrition Flexibility Act" is a bipartisan piece of legislation which currently has over 30 cosponsors.

As you know, H.R. 1303 would permanently eliminate the weekly grain and protein maximums while maintaining the calorie maximums in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. With this bill, Congress will protect the nutritional integrity of the school lunch standards while giving local schools and industry providers more flexibility to design healthy menus that meet standards and student tastes. It is a simple, yet powerful step Congress can take to ease the increasing burden not only on those who prepare the meals, but those who provide the food and equipment resources utilized by the school nutrition professionals while still maintaining the integrity of serving healthy and nutritious meals to kids. While USDA has extended the temporary relief into School Year 2013-2014, we need the permanent elimination to move forward with meal planning and production.

We also support Section 3 of the bill which addresses the paid meal equity section of the current law. Current law now requires for the first time since 1946, that certain School Food Authorities annually increase their paid meal prices regardless of their financial solvency. H.R. 1303 would amend the law by narrowing its scope to those School Food Authorities that have a negative fund balance at the end of the previous school year. When setting meal prices, school boards take into account local food and labor costs and what families are able and willing to pay. We note that participation in the paid meal program is down this year and believe this new requirement is a contributing factor.

We hope the Committee will move promptly on this important legislation. There is no cost associated with the bill.

Sincerely,

Sandra E. Ford, SNS
President