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December 6, 2007

The Honorable Mel Martinez  
356 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510-0903

Via Facsimile (202) 228-5171

Dear Senator Martinez:

On behalf of the Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), I am urging you to support the Harkin/Murkowski School Nutrition Amendment to the Farm Bill. As recent headlines continually remind us, childhood obesity rates are soaring in the United States and in Florida. The Harkin/Murkowski Amendment is one significant step that can be taken to set standards that improve the quality of foods available for sale to our children and help address the childhood obesity epidemic.

### **About the OAC**

The OAC is a non profit patient organization dedicated to educating and advocating on behalf of those affected by obesity, morbid obesity and childhood obesity. Founded in 2005, the OAC was created to address the obesity epidemic and its devastating impact on the quality of health, quality of life and socioeconomic status of those impacted as well as its significant impact on society. The OAC started after a legislator pointed out that he was often asked to address the obesity epidemic, but rarely heard from those affected by obesity themselves. The OAC's focus is unique as we represent the views and interests of the nearly 1/3 of all Americans who are personally affected by obesity. Based in Tampa, Fla., the OAC is a national organization consisting of members in all 50 states.

### **Childhood Obesity**

Childhood obesity is a growing epidemic in the United States. Childhood obesity affects more than 30 percent of children, making it the most common chronic disease of childhood. This number has more than tripled since 1980, and it is not a cosmetic problem. Today, more and more children are diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension and other co-morbid conditions associated with obesity. Children who are classified in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile or above are 70 percent more likely to continue being obese into adulthood. In addition, they are at greater risk for serious medical issues such as heart disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, sleep apnea and cancer throughout their lifetime. Studies have indicated that most children who are currently obese will suffer serious health affects in their adult lives.

### **Harkin/Murkowski School Nutrition Amendment**

The Harkin/Murkowski School Nutrition Amendment will define the types of food and beverage products that may be offered for sale in schools. It specifically limits both beverages and foods with standards varying by grade level. A summary statement specifically indicating the nutritional requirements of both beverages and foods is

attached for your review. The Amendment is widely supported by a number of groups including the OAC, American Diabetes Association, American Dietetic Association, American Medical Association, American Cancer Society, National PTA, Shaping America's Health and more than 100 other groups.

The OAC respectfully requests your support of the Harkin/Murkowski School Nutrition Amendment to the Farm Bill. Your support in this matter would be greatly appreciated and would impact the lives of many of your constituents. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information or be of assistance on any other obesity-related issues. I can be reached via phone at (800) 717-3117 or e-mail at [jnadglowski@obesityaction.org](mailto:jnadglowski@obesityaction.org). Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Nadglowski Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Joseph Nadglowski Jr.  
OAC President & CEO

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# Support the Amendment to Update Nutrition Standards For Foods and Beverages Sold in Schools

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## PURPOSE

Chairman Harkin will offer an amendment to update the national nutritional standards for foods and beverages sold out of vending machines, school stores, and other venues outside of the school meals programs. Supported by the public health community and by the food and beverage industry, the amendment is a practical, workable approach that will ensure that healthier foods and beverages are offered for sale in schools across the country.

## WHAT THE AMENDMENT DOES

- **Sale of Foods and Beverages:** The amendment establishes the types of food and beverage products that may be offered for sale in schools.
  - **Beverages:**
    - Elementary and Middle Schools:  
Bottled water, without added flavors, carbonation or sweeteners  
Up to 8 oz servings of milk and juice, or fluid milk substitutes, up to 170 cal/8 oz
    - High Schools:  
Bottled water, may include added flavoring, noncaloric sweeteners, or carbonation.  
Up to 12 oz servings of milk or juice, or fluid milk substitutes, up to 170 cal/8 oz  
Up to 12 oz servings of other beverages with no more than 66 cal/ 8 oz, phased down over 5 years to 25 cal/8 oz, except for beverages offered for sale in athletic areas
  - **Foods:**
    - Content Restrictions: ≤ 35% calories from fat (except for nuts and reduced-fat cheese)  
≤ 10% of calories from saturated fat (except for reduced-fat cheese)  
≤ 35% sugar by weight  
Sodium Limits Apply
    - Calorie Restrictions: Elementary and Middle School – 180 calories  
High School – 200 calories
    - Rulemaking: USDA would establish nutritional guidelines for main dishes sold a la carte outside of the reimbursable meals program.
- **Implementation:** USDA would be required to provide guidance to States to help them identify foods and beverages that meet these nutritional guidelines. USDA would have the authority to update the standards where necessary.
- **Effective Date:** To give states sufficient time to make gradual adjustments and comply with the nutritional standards, the effective date of the amendment is July 1, 2011.
- **Fundraising Exception:** Exceptions to the standards are provided for school-approved fundraisers.