

March 19, 2010

The Honorable Jared Polis  
501 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Polis:

We, the undersigned, strongly support your NEW Schools Act, which would strengthen local school nutrition and physical activity wellness policies and U.S. Department of Agriculture technical assistance and training to enhance the effectiveness of the child nutrition programs and expand nutrition education and promotion efforts to support and improve children's diets and health.

One in three young people is either overweight or obese, raising their risk for heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes, which are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the U.S. Habits and diets during childhood affect health throughout life. Nutrition education, physical activity and health literacy are essential to protecting children's health, addressing health care costs, and enhancing national investments in the child nutrition programs.

Established in the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, local wellness policies call for school districts to address nutrition and physical activity in schools. That law has resulted in many schools adopting policies for foods sold on campus, physical activity, and nutrition education. However, implementation across the country has not been uniformly strong. In addition, many schools lack access to resources and best practices to help them implement wellness policies, and many local wellness policies remain unavailable to parents and other key members of the school community.

The NEW Schools Act would strengthen local school nutrition and physical activity wellness policies by enhancing their implementation, establishing standing local wellness policy committees, making the wellness policies more transparent to parents and school staff, and including policies for physical education and food marketing in schools.

Current nutrition education and promotion efforts in schools are insufficient. Schools lack adequate resources to provide effective nutrition education throughout the school environment. Many child nutrition programs include some nutrition education components but there is no or limited coordination.

The NEW Schools Act would provide \$70 million per year for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to provide grants to states to enhance technical assistance and training and dissemination of model materials and best practices to help schools improve the nutritional quality of school foods, the offerings through school vending machines, the use and processing of school commodities, and local wellness policy development,

implementation, and evaluation. It also would provide grants to school districts to strengthen and support local nutrition education and promotion programs and policies.

The NEW School Act would enhance and strengthen current national investments in the child nutrition programs and support child health. We appreciate your leadership on this important legislation to support nutrition and physical activity by school children.

Respectfully,

America Walks	Directors of Health Promotion and Education
American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance	Eat Smart, Move More South Carolina
American Diabetes Association	Ehrens Consulting, Bismarck, ND
American Dietetic Association	Fitness Forward
American Heart Association	FGE Food and Nutrition Team
American Institute for Cancer Research	Focus on Agriculture in Rural Maine Schools (FARMS)
American Public Health Association	Health Promotion Council
American School Health Association	Healthy Schools Campaign
American Society of Bariatric Physicians	HealthyPlanet
Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors	Hunter College, Program in Nutrition
B. Sackin & Associates	Maternity Care Coalition
Be Active New York State	National Action Against Obesity
California Center for Public Health Advocacy	National Association for Sport and Physical Education
CardioVision 2020	National Association of State Boards of Education
Center for Science in the Public Interest	National Consumers League
Community Health Partnership: Oregon's Public Health Institute	National PTA
Consumer Federation of America	National WIC Association
	North Dakota Dietetic Association
	Obesity Action Coalition

Oral Health America

Partners for a Healthy Nevada

Partnership for Prevention

Physicians Committee for  
Responsible Medicine

Prevention Research Center, Yale  
University School of Medicine

Preventive Cardiovascular Nurses  
Association

Produce for Better Health

Produce Marketing Association

Shape Up America

Save the Children

Society for Nutrition Education

Teachers College, Columbia  
University, Program in Nutrition  
and Center for Food &  
Environment

Trust for America's Health

United Fresh Produce Association