

March 26, 2010

Council Chamber  
John A. Wilson Building, Room 500  
1350 Pennsylvania Ave  
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Council members;

Today I stand before you to recommend the Healthy Schools Act of 2009. The proposed Bill is the first real step in us trying to prevent further harming our children through poor school nutrition practices currently in force.

As a professional food buyer, a DC public school parent and a trained chef with substantial nutrition education, I am appalled at what our food habits and policies are inflicting upon our children. Since the 1950's we have relied on nutrition information published by the Department of Agriculture, who are sadly more concerned with pushing bulk food surpluses down America's throat than the promoting of healthy eating. Compounded by the relentless marketing of the processed food industry we have become a fast food nation who is more focused on instant food gratification than the long term health effects of food and nutrition on America's families.

These factors culminate into today's obesity epidemic and have left us with a food system that has little concern with our children's health or future.

The Bill highlights 3 critical needs for our school age children. 1) healthy locally produced sustainable foods (farm-to-school program), 2) an environmentally non-toxic environment including abundant fresh filtered drinking water and 3) mandatory physical fitness and nutrition education programs to instill proper habits for life. I implore you to pass this Bill, set these 3 critical solutions in motion and stop us from inflicting continued damage on our children.

My 8 year old daughter is a veteran farm-to-table eater. During a recent kitchen repair and renovation she experienced the current 'hot lunch' program at her school. By the second week she was begging to return to her packed lunches! She complained of no fresh water at the lunch table, the lack of fresh fruit, the lack of vegetables and poor choices. What was most alarming to me was that my fit and healthy eater always came home starving. This is not because she did not eat the 'hot lunch' but because the food is highly processed, lacks satiety and is no where nearly as well balanced as the home-prepared packed lunch I provide for her. This is disgraceful.

If this is happening to a fit and healthy child, you can imagine the impact on children who are not so well prepared. We cannot continue to serve unhealthy foods to our children and to instill upon them poor nutrition habits when we have the ability not to.

Pass the Bill and stop the damage we are inflicting on our children.

Sincerely  
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