

The Honorable John Hoven
338 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Angus King
133 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

16 September, 2015

Dear Senators:

On behalf of Oldways, a Massachusetts-based 501(c)3 educational non-profit dedicated to fostering good health through heritage, and its Whole Grains Council, we are writing to urge you to support the progress made by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. It's essential that Congress protect the nutrition standards essential to learning and growing – and not bow to pressure to roll back the current standards.

National polls¹ demonstrate that nearly 70% of Americans believe school meals today are excellent or good, as opposed to 26% in 2010, before the new standards were implemented. We've come a long way from a daily diet of French fries and cookies, but most children continue to fall far short of health recommendations. We must continue to build on this existing progress.

Keeping the current standards for whole grains is especially important. Currently, all grain foods must be "whole grain-rich" – meaning at least half the grain in these foods must be whole grain. This standard matches the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans' mandate to "make at least half your grains whole." Federal law (7 USC Sec. 5341) requires that the dietary guidelines "shall be promoted by each Federal agency in carrying out any Federal food, nutrition, or health program." Loosening the current requirements for whole grain-rich in schools to allow just half of grain foods to be whole grain-rich would violate 7 USC Sec. 5341, as it would result in only about one-quarter of grains served in school being whole grain ($\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$)

Providing children with healthy food is a crucial investment in our nation's future, and is our responsibility as adults. Since the new school nutrition regulations have been

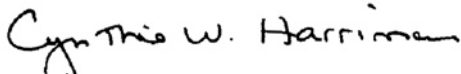
implemented, research² shows an increased consumption of healthy foods (including fruit, vegetables, and whole grains). This explains why 86% of Americans say school nutrition requirements should stay the same or be strengthened, and 95% of schools are successfully meeting the requirements.

Improving the health of our children is a bipartisan issue. Don't let a vocal minority drown out a sea of success stories. We urge Congress to reauthorize the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (Public Law 111-296) and to strengthen school nutrition programs across the nation. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Sara Baer-Sinnott
President, Oldways



Cynthia W. Harriman
Director of Food & Nutrition Strategies, Oldways



Kelly Toups, MLA, RD, LDN
Program Manager, Oldways

¹ "2015 School Food Poll," *W.K. Kellogg Foundation*
<http://ww2.wkkf.org/2015schoolfoodpoll/>

² Marlene B. Schwartz et al. "New School Meal Regulations Increase Fruit Consumption and Do Not Increase Total Plate Waste," *Childhood Obesity* 11 no. 3 (2015):242-247.
Juliana F.W. Cohen et al., "Impact of the New U.S. Department of Agriculture School Meal Standards on Food Selection, Consumption, and Waste," *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 46 no. 4 (2014):388-394.