



NEWS RELEASE

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Rep. Ryan Introduces Legislation to Expand Produce Industry Efforts for Salad Bars in Schools

WASHINGTON, D.C. (June 3, 2015) – Today, the United Fresh Produce Association co-hosted a Congressional Briefing with Congressman Tim Ryan (D-OH) on *Increasing Students' Access to Fruits and Vegetables: Salad Bars in Schools*. Prior to the briefing Congressman Ryan introduced *The Salad Bar in Schools Expansion Act* in the House of Representatives.

The *Salad Bar in Schools Expansion Act* establishes grant funding to provide training, technical assistance and placement of salad bars in elementary, middle and high schools across the country. It also ensures USDA is proactive in promoting school salad bars and allows schools flexibility to use federal funding for cafeteria equipment to purchase salad bars.

"This important legislation is about more than just salad bars in schools; it's about creating lifelong healthy choices for America's children," said Tom Stenzel, President and CEO of United Fresh Produce Association.

At today's briefing, Congressman Ryan was joined by a panel of nutrition, agriculture, and policy experts along with school children who addressed the critical need to expand children's access to fruits and vegetables. The panel included:

- Diane Harris, Ph.D. M.P.H. C.H.E.S., Health Scientist, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
- Stephanie Scarmo, Ph.D. M.P.H., Officer, Kids' Safe and Healthful Foods Project, Pew Charitable Trusts;
- Carrie Beegle, Food Service Director, Cloverleaf Local Schools;
- Ken Holthouse, President, Ohio Produce Growers & Marketers Association and General Manager & Owner/Partner, Doug Walcher Farms; and
- Nicholas Mansour and Sabastian Mason, Carrollton Middle School 6th grade in Carrollton, Georgia.

Speakers highlighted the importance of expanding salad bars in schools, the evidence-base for salad bars, benefits to improving students' nutritional status, great success salad bars are having in schools around the country, the need for federal investment in school cafeteria equipment and the support of agriculture.

United Fresh Produce Association also was joined by allied produce organizations from across the country in support of this legislation, including:

- California Fresh Fruit Association
- Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
- Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association
- Grower-Shipper Association of Central California
- National Potato Council
- National Watermelon Association
- New York Apple Association
- Ohio Produce Growers and Marketing Association
- Texas Citrus Mutual
- Texas International Produce Association
- Texas Vegetable Association
- Western Growers
- U.S. Apple Association

Academic research continues to indicate that school salad bars increase children's consumption of a wide variety of fruits and vegetables and help foster healthy eating habits. That is why over the last five years, the fresh produce industry, foundations, and allied businesses have donated more than 4,000 salad bars to schools, benefitting more than 2 million children nationwide. These donations are helping to increase children's access to a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables every day at school lunch. Many schools would like to implement salad bars, but do not always have the capital resources to purchase salad bars on their own. Through this effort schools have discovered that salad bars are more than just a piece of equipment. They are a conversation starter about the importance of healthy school meals and encouraging children to select more healthy fresh fruits and veggies. The *Salad Bar in Schools Expansion Act* will help build on the industry efforts to ensure that more schools across the country will be afforded the same opportunity as current recipients of donated salad bars.

"*The Salad Bar in Schools Expansion Act* will enhance students' access to fresh fruits and vegetables at school lunch and help to transform school food environments. Salad bars are an effective strategy to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, introduce kids to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, and one of the easiest ways for schools to successfully implement healthier school lunch standards," Stenzel stated.

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About United Fresh Produce Association

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association brings together companies across every segment of the fresh produce supply chain, including growers, shippers, fresh cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations.

We empower industry leaders to shape sound government policy. We deliver the resources and expertise companies need to succeed in managing complex business and technical issues. We provide the training and development individuals need to advance their careers in produce. Through these endeavors, we unite our industry with a common purpose – to build long-term value for our members and grow produce consumption. For more information, visit www.unitedfresh.org