

September 9, 2015

The Honorable Pat Roberts
Chairman
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kline
Chairman
House Education and the Workforce
Committee
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Agriculture,
Nutrition & Forestry
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert C. Scott
Ranking Member
House Education and the Workforce
Committee
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Roberts, Kline and Ranking Members Stabenow and Scott:

We the undersigned organizations write to request your strong support to keep a ½ cup of a fruit or a vegetable in school meals and to keep the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program “FRESH” in the 2015 Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

On average, children in the U.S. eat less than half of the daily amount of fruits and vegetables recommended for good health. Since 2012, many significant improvements have resulted in healthier school meals, including that every meal has at least a ½ cup of a fruit or a vegetable. This means that 32 million American children now have school meals with more fresh fruits and vegetables and research indicates they have increased their fruit and vegetable consumption by 23 percent and 16 percent, respectively. Nationwide, 91% of parents strongly support including a ½ cup of a fruit or a vegetable in every school meal. Schools around the country have added salad bars and implemented other successful, innovative strategies to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines recommends that children...“make half their plate fruits and vegetables at every meal” and that needs to start with school meals. How can you call it a healthy school meal if it doesn’t have at least a ½ cup of a fruit or a vegetable?

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) has been a model of success for more than a decade, providing 4 million low income elementary students with a fresh fruit or vegetable snack every day at school, introducing them to a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and helping them develop healthy eating habits for a lifetime. A national evaluation demonstrated that the FFVP significantly increases children’s fruit and vegetable consumption, is very popular with schools, parents and children, and schools say the FFVP also results in students eating more fruits and vegetables at lunch. And, a recent study has demonstrated that the FFVP reduces childhood obesity in participating children. School meals already provide ample amounts of processed fruits and vegetables, the FFVP provides children with the opportunity to eat fresh produce. We strongly oppose expanding the FFVP to include canned, frozen, or dried fruits and vegetables, otherwise known as “all forms.”

We urge the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee and the House Education and Workforce Committee to keep a ½ cup of fruits or vegetables in school meals and keep the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program “Fresh.”

Very respectfully,

United Fresh Produce Association
American Mushroom Institute
National Onion Association
National Peach Council
National Watermelon Association
Produce Marketing Association
U.S. Apple Association
US Sweet Potato Council
Idaho-Oregon Fruit and Vegetable Association
Illinois-Indiana Watermelon Association
Maryland-Delaware Watermelon Association
Northwest Horticultural Council
Southeast Produce Council
Western Growers
Western Watermelon Association

Alabama Watermelon Association
Fresh Produce Association of the Americas
California Citrus Mutual
California Fresh Fruit Association
Fresh Produce and Floral Council
Grower-Shipper Association of Central California
Ventura County Agricultural Association
Colorado Potato Administrative Committee
Florida Citrus Packers
Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association
Florida Tomato Exchange
Florida Watermelon Association
Georgia Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association
Georgia Watermelon Association
Michigan Apple Association
New York Apple Association
North Carolina Sweet Potato Commission
North Carolina Watermelon Association
Pennsylvania Apple Marketing Program
South Carolina Watermelon Association
Texas Citrus Mutual
Texas International Produce Association
Texas Vegetable Association
Texas Watermelon Association
Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association

CC: Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry
CC: House Education and the Workforce Committee