



NEWS RELEASE

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**Statement by United Fresh President & CEO Tom Stenzel
*Produce Industry Supports House Education & Workforce Committee
Hearing on Child Nutrition Reauthorization***

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 15, 2015) – As Congress begins works this year to reauthorize child nutrition programs, we are reminded of the significant role government plays to ensure we are putting our children’s health at the forefront of these critical programs that support public health.

More than 30 million children eat meals at school each day, so the need for healthy school meals is indisputable. With more than one-third of America’s youth (age 2-19) overweight or obese, and nearly 50 percent of children in low income families facing food insecurity, it is critical that school food policies support both the needs of kids today, and help teach healthy eating habits for life.

Nowhere is this more important than helping kids get off to a strong start to meet our national public health goals to fill *Half the Plate* with fruits and vegetables. Fruit and vegetable consumption today is less than half of that urged by USDA and HHS for good health, and schools are the incubator of healthy habits for a lifetime. Current child nutrition policy takes a good step forward by including one-half cup of fruits and vegetables in school meals. While it’s a modest step toward *Half the Plate*, it’s an important start that must be maintained.

In the last five years, the fresh produce industry has worked with numerous industry and public health partners to donate more than 4,000 salad bars to schools nationwide – a major effort to expand access to fruits and vegetables and improve children’s overall diets. We are committed to helping schools succeed in expanding fruit and vegetable consumption, because it’s too important to our children’s health to turn back now.

The fresh produce industry looks forward to working with Chairman Kline, Ranking Member Scott and the entire House Education and Workforce committee as members take on the important responsibility to help kids adopt healthy habits for a lifetime.

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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. www.unitedfresh.org