

March 9, 2016

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

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

Dear Chairman Kline and Ranking Member Scott:

As seven of the largest school districts in Ohio, we write to express our strong support for protecting the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) as a 'Fresh' fruit and vegetable program when the House Education and the Workforce Committee marks up the 2016 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill.

Together our Ohio school districts – Cleveland, Columbus, Cincinnati, Dayton, Akron, Canton, and Youngstown – have a total of 127 low-income elementary schools participating in the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program this school year which benefits more than 115,000 of our young students.

Over the last decade, we have all seen firsthand the benefits of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program – it introduces young children to a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, increases their fruit and vegetable consumption, made it easy to implement the new fruit and vegetable school lunch/breakfast nutrition standards and helped us improve the healthfulness of the school food environment. We strongly believe that the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program should remain a "fresh" fruit and vegetable program.

A comprehensive national evaluation of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program demonstrated that it is very effective and significantly increases children's consumption of fruits and vegetables, without increasing their average intake of calories. And the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program is an important strategy to improve children's eating habits, promote good health, and reduce risk of overweight/obesity and other diet related health problems.

I urge you to protect the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program as a "Fresh" program in the 2016 Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

Very respectfully,

Jessica Shelly, MBA, SNS, REHS  
Food Services Director, Cincinnati Public Schools  
Midwest Regional Director, SNA  
President, School Nutrition Association of Ohio

Joe Brown  
Food Service Director  
Columbus City Schools

Laura Kepler, M.S.Ed., R.D.  
Coordinator, Child Nutrition  
Akron Public Schools

Susan Paris  
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Youngstown City Schools

Linda J. Rife  
Child Nutrition Supervisor  
Canton City School District

Joseph Vaughn, M.ED  
Executive Director Food and Child Nutrition Services  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District

Cathie DeFehr, RD, LD  
Director Nutrition Services  
Dayton Public Schools

CC: Education and the Workforce Committee

April 21, 2016

The Honorable XXX  
U.S. House of Representatives  
XX XX House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative X,

As Ohio produce growers, fresh-cut processors and distributors of fresh fruits and vegetables to school districts all over Ohio, we write to express our strong opposition to changing the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) to include "all forms" of processed fruits and vegetables in the House Education and the Workforce Committee's 2016 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill H.R. 5003.

The Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program benefits Ohio children, Ohio companies and Ohio's economy.

This school year, 235 low-income Ohio elementary schools and more than 100,000 students participate in the FFVP. These students benefit from receiving a fresh fruit or vegetable snack at school several days a week. We have seen firsthand the benefits of the FFVP – it introduces young children to a wide variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, increases their fruit and vegetable consumption, improves their acceptance of healthier school meals and improves the healthfulness of the school food environment. In addition, a recent study by the University of Arkansas demonstrates that participation in the FFVP helps to reduce childhood obesity.

School districts all over Ohio want to keep the FFVP "fresh" and have sent you and the Committee a letter (attached) stating their position. We invite you visit an Ohio FFVP school with us to see for yourself how the FFVP is benefitting children.

The FFVP is also important to our businesses and our local and state economy. Our companies and our employees are honored to supply fresh fruits and vegetables to FFVP schools in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, East Cleveland City Schools, Akron Public Schools, Cincinnati Public School, Columbus City Schools, Canton City School District, Dayton Public Schools, Youngstown City Schools, and other schools all over Ohio. FFVP generates over \$4.8 million in fresh produce sales each year in Ohio, which supports a number of jobs in your district, as well as throughout the state.

Changing the FFVP to include "all forms" of processed fruits and vegetable will not expand the Program to more children, but will in fact deprive these children of fresh fruits and vegetables. Ohio's children already have plenty of access to processed fruits and vegetables in school breakfast and lunch. Introducing children to fresh fruits and vegetables in the FFVP results in these students choosing more fruits and vegetables, of all types, in school meals.

For the benefit of Ohio's children, we ask you to reconsider your position on the FFVP. We ask for your support in keeping the FFVP "fresh" in the 2016 Child Nutrition Reauthorization.

Very respectfully,

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