

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,

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Food Services Director, Cincinnati Public Schools  
Midwest Regional Director, SNA  
President, School Nutrition Association of Ohio

Joe Brown  
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CC: Education and the Workforce Committee