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Friis, John

From: Teresa Dotson [tmdotson@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 06, 2009 10:48 AM
To: Friis, John
Cc: Sen. Witkos, Kevin; Tim Legeyt
Subject: Testimony for Governor's bill 830

Attachments: testimony school nutrition bill.doc



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Dear Members of the Education committee,

Three years ago, I came before you to testify to support implementing Health food standards for CT schools, a copy of my original testimony is attached. Since the time this legislation has passed, I have worked with the Canton School system and my professional organization (CT Dietetic Association) to educate parents, student and schools on the importance of investing in our children's health through education and serving of food that meets the nutrition standards. As part of the bill, an incentive of 10 cents per meal was provided to all schools who "certified" they met the Healthy food standards set by the Dept of Education. These standards were developed and continue to be updated based on the latest research and input from many health care and education professionals.

I understand the current economic times requires all budget items to be examined, however a decrease in this funding puts an additional burden on schools who struggle to provide healthy food to children. As I said in my original testimony, nutrition for children is essential to promote health and prevent chronic diseases. By maintaining this small investment in promoting healthy food for school children you are saving on future healthcare expenses as they grow into adults. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration on this matter.

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Connecticut Dietetic Association

"Serving the public through the promotion of optimal nutrition and well-being"

www.eatrightct.org

CDA Testimony regarding S. B. No. 381 An Act Concerning Healthy Food and Beverages in Schools and S. B. 375 An Act Concerning Connecticut-Grown Foods in Schools

To: Senator Thomas P Gaffey and Representative Andrew M. Fleischmann, Co-chairmen
Committee on Elementary and Secondary Education

Date: March 3, 2006

Good afternoon, my name is Teresa Dotson. I am from Canton Connecticut, a mother of two children in public school, a registered dietitian and state certified dietitian-nutritionist.

On behalf of the Connecticut Dietetic Association (an affiliate of the American Dietetic Association) with a membership of more than one thousand nutrition professionals, I would like to voice our strong support for **S. B. No. 381 An Act Concerning Healthy Food and Beverages in Schools and S. B. 375 An Act Concerning Connecticut-Grown Foods in Schools**. The Connecticut Dietetic Association (CDA) encourages the adoption of these bills. In particular, the implementation of S.B. 381 would have a profound, positive effect on the school nutrition environment with the potential to improve the diets, health, and learning of students.

The provisions that specify which beverages can be sold, eliminating sweetened and diet soft drinks have particular merit. Consumption of soft drinks often displaces milk as a beverage, reducing intake of nutrients (in particular Calcium and protein) and increasing calories consumed. The sale and promotion of these beverages, including sodas, sports drinks, and fruit drinks, promotes the erroneous belief among students, that consuming them is part of a healthful diet and without long-term consequences. Questions have arisen about the value of sports drinks. From a nutritional standpoint soda and sports drinks are in the same category. They provide calories with limited nutritional value. A Sports drink fact sheet is attached to my testimony that contains further details.

In addition, this bill contains financial incentive for schools that meet the Department of Education standards for "healthy foods and beverages." It is important to establish the importance of healthy choices in children. It is well documented in the literature that a healthy lifestyle can prevent or treat many diseases such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, osteoporosis, obesity, diabetes and cancer. These are not "adult" diseases, but an accumulation of lifestyle choices learned from childhood to present. It is an uphill battle to live "well" in a society surrounded by unhealthy food messages. In the legislature and across the business community, the rising cost of healthcare is causing a budget crisis. Promoting a healthy lifestyle and nutritious food choices, as outlined in this bill, is a direct way to improve the health of children and reduce future healthcare costs.

The Connecticut Dietetic Association strongly endorses this bill and encourages its adoption. As a mother and nutrition professional, I applaud this bill. If adopted, food and beverage choices in schools would improve and school food systems would be strengthened. Students who are well nourished are better able to learn. Parents, who provide their children with healthy diets, would be supported, not undermined. This bill promotes a consistent message about the importance of nutrition and healthy food and beverage choices throughout the school, including activities, classroom teaching and in the cafeteria.

Teresa Dotson, RD, CD-N, Registered Dietitian, Certified Dietitian-Nutritionist