

February 16, 2010

GOVERNOR'S BILL No. 5020 SECTION 4 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNOR CONCERNING EDUCATION

Good evening members of the Education Appropriations Committee. My name is Dana Tice, and I am the Director of Food Service for Bloomfield Public Schools. I am here tonight to respectfully request that you do not support Governor's Bill No. 5020 as written, which proposes to reduce funding of the National School Lunch Program.

In these uncertain times struggling families are putting their trust in us to provide their children with healthy, nutritious meals while they are at school. In many instances the meals we provide may be the only meals their children will get that day.

The task of offering more nutritious choices like fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains, while monitoring portion sizes, calories, fats, sugar and sodium, to name a few, is a daunting one. It seems that every month more and more state and federal initiatives are added to our programs without additional funding to support them. With the increasing cost of food, labor and benefits, our program is struggling to stay self sufficient. Bloomfield School Food Service does not receive revenue from the district and relies on income from sales and federal reimbursements only.

We have chosen to participate in the Healthy Foods Certification program because it is the right thing to do for the children. We work hard to provide all children the best quality, most nutritious meals and snacks possible. In order to do this, however, there is a significant increased cost to our program. Participation in the program has meant a significant loss in a la carte sales revenue. The money that we receive by participating in the Healthy Foods program does not come close to offsetting the sales revenue that we lost.

In a letter to the National Governors Association dated January 28, 2010, our Governor, along with Governor Ritter, has asked for increased funding from the federal government through the Child Nutrition Act to support the National School Lunch Program. It does not help us to increase funding from the federal government and decrease it from the state through Governor's Bill No. 5020. Please consider the health and well being of children and maintain the state funding to our programs.