

Honorable Co-Chairs Senator Gaffey and Representative Fleischmann and distinguished members of the Education Committee,

I am Madeleine Diker, Food Service Director for the Cheshire Public Schools Child Nutrition Program. I am also a former president and current member of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut. SNACT is a non profit organization made up of over 500 food service professionals in 94 child nutrition programs across our state and with a national organization, SNA, in Washington D.C.

I am here today to speak to the serious concerns that our food service directors in our organization have in regard to proposed Governor's budget in HB5020 sec 4 (a).

This bill, in essence proposes limiting the total funding a Healthy Nutrition Certified District would receive in state funding. In 1946 when the National School Lunch Program began, the states across the nation were mandated to provide matching funding. In 1980 the matching funding became a minimum amount of 2.5 million in the form of a block grant. This was the equivalent of 7.5 cents per lunch meal in 1980.

Today because there are more meals served we receive only 4.5 cents per lunch meal served. Had the state matching block grant of 7.5 cents kept up to inflation the funding would be at 25 cents or more per meal. In 2006 the Connecticut legislators voted in 10 cents per meal in addition to the block grant with the caveat that all items sold to students on the entire school campus will follow the strict nutrition standards as set by the Connecticut State Department of Education in Middletown. This was a brilliant bold move that only a handful of states in the nation tried. And it worked and is successful. Basically no matter where the students were during the school day the food offered for sales were in the correct portion size, were reduced fat and limited added sugars, and sodium. Child Nutrition programs were also able to provide more expensive fresh fruits and vegetables on the ala carte at a reasonable cost.

The Healthy Certification Program has been successful and there are several ways we know that success has been reached.

#1. We have heard from many parents that they did not know that their children liked Locally Grown Farm Fresh Italian Plums and Pears. That is success in influencing healthy choices behavior.

#2. A parent told me of a story where she sent her son, a high school student, to the store for hamburger buns and returned with Whole Grain Hamburger buns. When she asked him why he got that type he said that this was the type of buns served in the school cafeteria and they tasted good. That is success in influencing healthy choices behavior.

#3. A mother that for years worked the concession stand as her sons played football told me at the end of the night it used to be that the concession stand would run out of soda. Now with the changes that have been made in the district she told me that the last time she worked the concession stand, that she had plenty of soda left and it was the bottled water that ran out. That is success in influencing healthy choices behavior.

#4. A study published in the Journal of American Dietetics February 2010 issue called Healthier Options for Public School Children Improves Weight and Blood Pressure in 6- to 13- Year-Olds. The title says it all.

Remember when you are immersed in nutritious choices campus wide, it then becomes the new normal.

Connecticut Nutrition Standards and Healthy Certified Districts get an A+ ✓✓✓

Please vote no on limiting the total amount of funding that a district could receive from Connecticut for child nutrition programs. Please vote no on HB 5020 -Governor's budget unless it is amended to increase the healthy certification funding to 15 cents per meal for Healthy Certified Districts.

Thank you.

Respectfully Madeleine C. Diker