



American Cancer Society
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**Children's Committee
February 27, 2014**

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Testimony

SB 48 An Act Concerning Nutrition Standards for Childcare and Early Learning Programs.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network's (ACS CAN) advocacy work on obesity, nutrition, and physical activity is focused on creating healthy social and physical environments and providing consumers with clear, useful information that support making healthy lifestyle choices. ***We support SB 48 - An Act Concerning Nutrition Standards for Childcare and Early Learning Programs.***

Obesity, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition are major risk factors for cancer, second only to tobacco use. One third of the estimated 585,720 cancer deaths in the US this year can be attributed to poor diet, physical inactivity, and overweight and obesity. Currently, approximately two in three adults and one in three youth are overweight or obese.

Obesity rates among children and adolescents have tripled in the past 30 years. Between 50-100% of a child's daily nutrition requirements comes from childcare and other away-from-home settings. Because overweight in youth tends to continue throughout life, it is essential that strong policies to improve nutrition and calorie balance be put in place, especially in childcare settings where infants and toddlers begin to establish healthy patterns.

SB 48 would establish nutrition standards for childcare settings and early education programs. The bill prohibits added artificial or naturally sweetened beverages, limits the juice intake for infants, establishes appropriate milk fat content levels for children and requires that water shall be available and easily accessible throughout the day.

Healthy food and beverage choices in childcare settings help establish good, lifelong nutrition habits and helps children avoid excess caloric intake. Educating children about healthy nutrition choices and the importance of developing good eating habits is wasted, however, if the snacks given to them in childcare consist of unhealthy choices.

Poor nutrition and the consumption of high-calorie foods and beverages are major contributors to overweight and obesity and increase the risk of cancer. Despite the evidence linking overweight and obesity, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity to increased cancer risk, the majority of American adults are not meeting recommended nutrition and physical activity targets. Social, economic, environmental, and cultural factors strongly influence individual choices about diet and physical activity.

Reversing obesity trends and reducing the associated cancer risk will require a broad range of strategies that include policy and environmental changes that make it easier for individuals to regularly make healthy diet and physical activity choices.

The tobacco control experience has shown that policy and environmental changes at the national, state, and local levels are critical to achieving changes in individual behavior. Measures such as smoke-free laws and increases in cigarette excise taxes have been highly effective in deterring tobacco use. To avert an epidemic of obesity-related disease, similar purposeful changes in public policy and in the community environment will be required to help individuals make smart food and physical activity choices and maintain a healthy body weight.

We support SB 48 and urge a favorable report.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard.

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