



Testimony before the Committee on Children
March 3, 2015

In support of [H.B. No. 6898](#) (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE MARKETING OF UNHEALTHY FOODS IN SCHOOLS

Good day, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and members of the Committee on Children. My name is Lucy Nolan and I am the executive director of End Hunger Connecticut!, a statewide anti-hunger and food security organization and as such sit on the CT Coalition to End Childhood Obesity and sat on the Task Force on Childhood Obesity. I am here today in support of raised H.B. No. 6898 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MARKETING OF UNHEALTHY FOODS IN SCHOOLS.

Connecticut has very healthy schools. That is something we can be proud of. That is also something we should maintain. This legislation is simple and really closes the circle on Connecticut's first in the nation and well-received School Nutrition legislation passed in 2006. That legislation was the catalyst for soda companies and others to revisit their impact in schools, nationally. This can do the same.

Children are inundated with marketing many times throughout the day, and school should be one place that they are not. We don't think about the many opportunities that poor food choices are marketed to them from prizes that include donuts and pizza, to ads in newsletters and even announcements over the PA system. Marketing of these products really undermines parent's efforts to feed children a healthy diet or to teach them about nutrition. Many children believe that if the school is supporting the effort than it must be good for them. But that's not always the case.

The current rules in Connecticut don't allow for the sale of foods that are not part of the Healthy Food Certification (HFC) or Smart Snack Standards during the school day. 86% of Connecticut schools are currently participating in the HFC and they cannot sell any snacks on the state authorized list at all at school unless they have been authorized by the Board of Education. Schools that are not part of the HFC but are receiving federal funds for school meals cannot sell food that is not part of the Smart Snack Standards during the school day. This legislation endures there is no confusion to the food that is appropriate for school.

I brought with me an example of a successful fundraiser that my children did when they were in high school. This water bottle was sold by their environmental club to raise funds for water bottle fountains in their school. They were successful and also imparted an important message

that water is a good and readily available drink. These are the kind of fundraisers and activities that children can learn from. Other examples are a card for discounts from local businesses, a walk –a-thon, and selling pencils. The list really is endless.

We want kids to experience fruit and vegetables and the federal government is going to great lengths to have children try these foods. Giving away pizza and donuts chip away at that message. I've brought with me some ads from a campaign that is going on in CT right now. With a grant from the USDA Connecticut received funds to support increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. A key part of the campaign is marketing. I've brought a couple of posters to show the committee. You can also find them and other pieces of the marketing campaign, which includes Connecticut's farmers, on their [website](#).

Ads for unhealthy foods may seem innocuous, but they compete with the message that we all want our children to receive, that there are better food choices that increase our health outcomes and our capability for learning.

HB 6898, An Act Concerning the Marketing Unhealthy Foods in Schools is good for our kids by creating a safety zone in our schools where our children learn their life long habits. We urge the committee to pass it.

Thank you very much.