

Subject: Implement a Standardized Nutrition Education Program Curriculum for Children

Dear Senator Dianne Feinstein,

I am a dietetic student who is passionate about improving the health of low-income children. In the United States, the Children Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act have improved the nutrition programs that involve education achievement, economic security, nutrition and overall health.

The connection between obesity and nutrition shows that preventative programs should be used in schools, which can be beneficial to all children. “Over the past four decades, the obesity rate has more than quadrupled for children ages 6 to 11 and more than tripled for adolescent’s ages 12 to 19 (2006-2007, Bridging the Gap).” Being that junk high calorie foods are cheaper today, those foods are accumulating more profit than nutritious fresh foods in our elementary school districts. Children are victims to fall in the traps from food industries into developing eating habits of high calorie dense foods for convenience, which later will become a lifestyle habit that can lead to chronic health complications. Although since the reauthorization in 2010, some schools districts have made improvements with competitive foods by bringing in nutritious food and making stricter requirements in the lunch program, which shows with government help, children can develop healthy nutritious eating habits.

The U.S. local school districts that participate in the National School Lunch program, which are under the Local Educational Agency are required to have a wellness policy that meets minimal requirements. School districts are required to come up with nutrition education goals. Importantly, school districts should implement nutrition education. Nutrition education should be a core component of a Comprehensive Health Education Program. Schools play an important role in the lives of our children. Children can learn healthy habits in nutrition and get hands on experience of cooking. If they learn to appreciate food, they will understand the beneficial side of using nutrition their skills in daily habit. If a nation wide standard curriculum is implemented, the federal government should also require evaluations of school district progression, so our schools can focus on preventive care for children. This can also be beneficial to out nation because it can bring forth more jobs and lower rates of chronic illness, which can lower healthcare costs as well.

Although according to Bridging The Gap, it shows evidence that wellness policies regarding nutrition education are varied and lacking. “For example, many students were enrolled in a district with a policy that only suggested a nutrition education curriculum, while others were enrolled in a district that did not define or indicate whether nutrition education was a component of the health education curriculum. The majority of students were enrolled in a district with a policy that did not address integrating nutrition education into core subjects (2006-2007, Bridging the Gap).”

Your goal is to create a healthy school environment, reduce childhood obesity and prevent diet-related chronic illness. “Research has already shown us that overweight and

obese children tend to miss more school, which also may affect academic performance. In contrast, strong evidence links healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors with improved academic performance and classroom behavior among school-age children (2006-2007, Bridging the Gap).” This is also another benefit to our nation, which can increase our youth’s academic performance in our school districts.

Section 204 of Wellness Policy should require funding and federal support. Federal government should develop a standard curriculum that requires all elementary schools with nutrition education to lower the obesity rates in children and other diet related chronic illnesses, and to educate our youth with lifelong skills.

I’m asking if you can take the time to review evaluation reports on local school districts to notice that the wellness policies needs more structure regarding nutrition education. The wellness policies have been inconsistent and ignored when it comes to having elementary schools have a nutrition curriculum. If you notice the data of schools districts that have a strong policy of a nutrition education curriculum, they have positive outcomes. Reauthorization occurs every five years, so in 2015, and within the time of 3 years, I propose a nation wide collaboration of health professionals from every state to develop and implement an outline of nation wide standards for a nutritional education curriculum for our elementary schools

Please contact me, if you have questions.

Sincerely,

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