



Senator Hoeven
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Senator King
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20515

June 24, 2015

Dear Senators Hoeven and King,

On behalf of AASA, The School Superintendents Association, the Association of Educational Service Agencies, the National Rural Education Association and the National Rural Education Advocacy Coalition, we write to express our strong support for the Healthy School Meals Flexibility Act. This act provides school districts with much-needed flexibility from the most onerous requirements of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act.

Collectively, our organizations (AASA, AESA, NREA and NREAC) represent public school superintendents, school system and educational service agency leaders, and rural educators, including parents, teachers, and administrators. We support school nutrition and the national school lunch program; we understand that a healthy, well-nourished student is best prepared to learn. However, the requirements in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act make it more difficult for schools and districts to provide tasty meals their students will eat at a reasonable cost.

The Healthy School Meals Flexibility Act reduces the whole grain requirement, currently at 100 percent, to 50 percent. This would allow school nutrition programs to maintain their commitment to serving healthy food, but would allow more flexibility in the items they serve and would allow them to sell previously popular items that may not be possible under the current 100 percent whole grain requirement. It also raises the permissible sodium levels. The current sodium restrictions create problems in serving healthy foods with naturally occurring sodium, including milk, cheese and meat.

While this bill would not fix the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, it would provide school meal programs will the flexibility they need to best serve their students healthy and tasty meals the students can enjoy.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue, and we look forward to working with you on this issue and a broader reauthorization effort.

Sincerely,

Leslie Finnan
Policy Analyst
AASA, The School Superintendents Association