

May 21, 2014

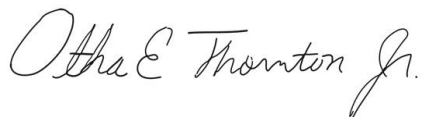
Dear Appropriations Committee Member:

On behalf of National PTA's 4.3 million members comprised of parents, families, students, administrators and community members, we urge you to reject any proposal to scale back nutrition standards for school meals in the Fiscal Year 2015 Appropriations process, including waivers to opt-out of select nutrition guidelines. I also implore you to listen to parents in this debate – as their children are the very consumers this program is intended to serve. PTA has a storied history in school meals – piloting a national hot lunch service in schools that predated the National School Lunch Program. Over 70 years later, we continue to value the importance of school-based meals that are healthy and nutritious. At a time when one-third of our nation's children are overweight or obese, we cannot stand for scaling back nutrition guidelines and comprising our federal investment in children's health.

As parents, families and community members deeply involved in our schools, we know that change can be difficult for both adults and children. However, doing the right thing for students is always our priority despite the challenges that may be faced along the way. At a time when families are working hard to live healthy lives, school meals should be supporting families' efforts, not working against them. And any necessary adjustments to the program should be done by working directly with the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the authority that has already been granted to them by Congress, or be debated openly through reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act, due to be reauthorized in 2015.

For decades, Congress has wisely ensured that federal child nutrition programs have been guided by science. It is our belief that our nation's children and families are best served when these programs' nutrition guidelines are not dictated through the appropriations process. We stand committed to working with families, students, schools, Congress and the USDA to ensure the nation's child nutrition programs are accessible, nutritious and successful. We ask that you oppose any provisions or amendments that impede the progress of these integral nutrition programs through the Fiscal Year 2015 appropriations process.

Sincerely,



Otha Thornton
National PTA President