



TO: HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
FROM: KASANDRA GRIFFIN
POLICY MANAGER FOR FOOD AND SCHOOL HEALTH
UPSTREAM PUBLIC HEALTH
DATE: APRIL 3, 2015
RE: IN SUPPORT OF HB 3363

Chair Doherty and Members of the Committee, my name is Kasandra Griffin. I work on food and school health at Upstream Public Health, which is a statewide public health advocacy organization. We believe that smart policies are the best way to create communities that help people lead healthier, fuller lives.

I am here today to introduce HB 3363 and the dash-three amendments. Thank you to Representative Reardon for sponsoring this bill and to all of you for hearing it.

In 2007, Oregon did two important things to make school food healthier. One was to start putting good foods INTO schools, by launching the Oregon Farm to School and School Garden program. The other was to take some of the least healthy foods OUT of schools, by passing a law setting nutrition standards for snacks sold at school. *Promotion of good things* is not enough to get kids to change their habits. So that 2007 law set nutrition standards for snacks sold on campus, based on calories, fat, and sugar content. The rules applied to all foods sold on campus except for the official federally reimbursable meals programs, which had their own standards. As of 2014, the federal government finally caught up with Oregon and set very similar national standards for what could be sold. The nutrition requirements for lunches increased recently as well, so the staff in school cafeterias are working quite hard, and the nutritional quality of the foods they are serving has improved a lot in the past five years in most places.

HB 3363-3 does not change what can be sold on campus (or when or where,) it *only* addresses *marketing*. It proposes that if a food or beverage item cannot be sold on campus, it should not be marketed there, either. It essentially closes a loophole – if the intention in 2007 was to “get junk food out of our schools,” this finishes the job, by taking their pictures and ads and coupons away, too.

In Oregon, over 53% of kids qualify for free and reduced price school meals. That means a couple things.

#1, it means that they are getting a lot of their calories at school.

#2, it means their families are struggling to make ends meet, and probably don't have the luxury of “teaching good food habits at home,” because they can't afford diets rich in fruits and vegetables.

So kids are getting their best food, *and their best food education*, at school. What we are

proposing, in this bill, is that Oregon should provide those kids – and all kids – with consistent messaging about food and health. If we have already agreed – as a state – that certain foods should not be sold at school, let's not send mixed messages to our impressionable kids and advertise those same items on campus. Kids can see when we are talking out of both sides of our mouths. Do we think their health is important, or do we not? Do we believe in healthy diets, or do we not?

The version of the bill that we are asking you to support today is the dash-three amendments, which completely replace the introduced version of the bill. We discovered that there were some problems with the original version, which tried to set marketing standards directly in statute, so this version asks ODE to set those standards, instead, to the extent allowable by law.

One of the motivations for this bill is that there is a diabetes epidemic threatening the health and the futures of our kids. Another motivation for this bill is that there are federal guidelines coming soon from the USDA, relating to school wellness policies, which will direct all school districts to take action to restrict marketing of foods that do not meet the nutrition standards for what may be sold at school. What we are asking you to do is to get ahead of those rules and ask ODE to start working on *consistent statewide standards* for all Oregon school districts to share.

When we talk about marketing on campus, we are talking about a few different common things, and then a wide variety of uncommon things. We are talking about vending machines, that can only sell certain products but aren't limited – by law – in what they can advertise on the outside, and we're talking about coupons for unhealthy foods being handed out by teachers, thereby giving the teacher's seal of approval to those foods. We're also talking about signs in the hallway for cookie sales, as well as signs encouraging kids to come to Burgers-R-Us. Those burger nights would not be outlawed, but the promotion of them would have to go directly to the parents, not to the kids. If schools wanted to move to healthier fundraiser options instead, there would be plenty of options, which will be addressed later in the testimony. The marketing that happens at schools in Oregon is not *horrible*, and it's not *everywhere*. But it does still exist, and it does impact our kids.

So please, take a stand in favor of our kids' health, and phase out the remaining junk food marketing from Oregon schools. I am asking you, and these other testifiers are asking you, and so are about 400 Oregonians who signed an online petition in the past two days, asking you to take action on this now.

Thank you for your attention and your service. I would be happy to answer questions now, or to let the rest of my colleagues share their testimony and then to answer questions at the end.