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5-13-2015

Oregon Senate Committee on Education

Chair Arnie Roblan

Honorable Chair Roblan and Committee,

I am writing this letter as the legislative chair of the Oregon School Nutrition Association (OSNA). Our association represents over 500 school nutrition professionals throughout Oregon.

OSNA's members are people that are on the front line, feeding Oregon's kids healthy meals and doing a great job, I must add, of interpreting and implementing all of the new and sometimes confusing state and federal guidelines.

We support the original language in HB 2404 on page 3, lines 8 through 14. The language in the bill around the entrée exemption mirrors the federal smart snacks exemption for entrees on the day served and the day after. Combining the Smart Snack entree rules with the current 450 calorie and 36% fat limit already limits the sales of our most popular food items.

We support nutritious lunches and snacks in schools and support strong standards for foods sold outside school meals in vending, school stores, through fundraisers and clubs. In Oregon we implemented these strong standards with House Bill 2640, Oregon law 336.423 and more recently with Oregon Smart Snacks.

We feel that school nutrition programs having the opportunity to provide federally "smart snack" compliant foods most notably, entrees in addition to full meals are a very sound option for our students. While we prefer that students take a complete meal, there are times a student does not want or cannot afford a complete meal. Sometimes all a person wants for lunch is a sandwich, salad or slice of Pizza. Under the proposed amendment many of these items would be banned.

When considering smart snack options, we must keep in mind that these choices have already been verified to meet federal guidelines. We are not talking about greasy store bought pizzas here. We are talking about items that have been specially formulated for schools that are lower in fats, made with whole grains and are low in sodium. The portion sizes are prescribed by age group and all grain entrees must be whole grain.

Most of our schools serve entrees that are an assemble and serve type item like a sandwich. These are very appetizing and we can control the ingredients. We are required to have standardized recipes that meet nutrition standards for all meals and entrees. It lacks logic to be able to serve a standardized entrée in a meal but not as an ala carte entrée as is allowed by current Federal Standards.

Again, We support the original language in HB 2404 on page 3, lines 8 through 14. Leave to the local school district's local wellness committees to exercise the option of making these stricter if they please.

Oregon has done a good job working to protect the health of its students with the previous limits set on foods sold outside school meals. Our State was in the forefront and was a model for some of the new standards but now there are Federal Standards setting limits from the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. Food producers have worked to meet those standards based on the Federal language. We believe that it is time that Oregon is aligned with Federal Standards as was written in the original language of House Bill 2404.

Sincerely,

Lynne Shore
Oregon School Nutrition Association Legislative Chair,
Nutrition Services Director, North Marion School District