



Society for Nutrition Education Public Policy Legislative & Regulatory Bulletin April 2003

This newsletter highlights key legislative and regulatory news about nutrition education issues in Washington, D.C. This report is prepared by SNE's Public Policy Consultant, Waterman & Associates.

SNE's Child Nutrition Reauthorization Position Paper Approved by the Board and Included in the Public Record for Senate Committee Hearing

The Society for Nutrition Education (SNE) has developed its first public policy position paper for its number one priority issue. The paper covers the society's position and goals on the important Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) issue. CNR was voted upon by the SNE membership to be one of the top six public policy priority issues. A copy of the position paper is posted on SNE's Web site at www.sne.org and can be found under the positions and resolutions link. Through the hard work of the members of SNE's Advisory Committee on Public Policy (ACPP) and many SNE members, the paper was approved by the SNE Board of Directors at the beginning of April! Thank you to all who worked hard on this initiative!

With the Board's approval, the ACPP distributed the society's position paper to key members of Congress, particularly the congressional committees who oversee CNR. SNE President Kathy McMahon and SNE President-Elect Jane Voichick signed formal letters to the Senate Agriculture Committee's Chairman Thad Cochran (R-MS) and Ranking Member Tom Harkin (D-IA). Letters were also sent to the House Education and Workforce Chairman John Boehner (R-OH-8) and Ranking Member George Miller (D-CA-7). The position paper was also e-mailed to various staff members who work for these congressional committees.

In addition, the Senate Agriculture Committee took steps to include SNE's position in the public record as a component to the committee's April 3rd hearing, which focused on the reauthorization of the 1966 Child Nutrition Act and the National School Lunch Act. Witnesses included officials administering these programs, with discussions on the Summer Food Service Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program and Women Infants and Children (WIC) Program. (For more information on the hearing, go to the committee's Web site at <http://agriculture.senate.gov>.)

On the CNR front, focus to the reauthorization process will resume once Congress returns from a two-week recess in May. Several pieces of legislation are expected to be

introduced by Senators Herb Kohl (D-WI), Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Tim Johnson (D-SD). These legislative initiatives will focus largely on program access. Look for more information on upcoming legislation in the May 2003 bulletin.

SNE Extends Comment Period for Food Guide Pyramid to May 2nd

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) is currently in the process reassessing and revising the Food Guide Pyramid (FGP). Last fall, the SNE membership selected the FGP as one of six public policy priority issues because of its foundation to most government food programs. SNE has the opportunity to provide the CNPP with comments on recommended revisions to the pyramid, specifically related to nutrition education. SNE must submit their comments to CNPP by early this summer.

SNE's Advisory Committee on Public Policy (ACPP) put together the following list of key FGP target areas that they would like SNE members to provide input and formal comments on. Those targeted areas include:

1. Division of Food Groups (including fats and sweets)
2. Representation of Nutritional Variety Within Each Food Group (i.e. – differences in fat and sugar intake within the bread group)
3. Pyramid Serving Sizes (and other portion size issues)
4. Graphic Representation of Foods
5. Representation/Inclusion of Different Eating Patterns (cultural differences, vegetarian diets)
6. Research Regarding Use of Pyramid as Educational Tool
7. Food System Sustainability (how the pyramid design enables or restrains promotion of)

SNE's comments will assist CNPP on making changes to the pyramid, as well as the accompanying educational materials.

For those SNE members who are interested in submitting comments on any of the targeted areas indicated above, please contact Jennifer Weber, jennifer@nchapman.com, by close of business on Friday, May 2nd, 2003. Be sure to provide specific comments, as they relate to nutrition education, and include supporting research citations where available.

Sen. Leahy's Amendment to Restore Strict Organic Standards Signed by President

In mid-April, Congress passed and President Bush signed a bill containing an amendment to repeal a special-interest rider enacted in February that threatened to undermine the six-month-old national organic standards and labeling program run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate voted to repeal the anti-organic clause, which was offered by Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-VT) as an amendment to the supplemental appropriations bill.

Leahy's bipartisan amendment was cosponsored by 51 other senators, and the leading Republican cosponsor was Sen. Larry Craig (R-ID). It is identical to the Organic Restoration Act (S.457), introduced by Leahy and Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), which has 70 Senate cosponsors. The counterpart legislation in the U.S. House was introduced as a bill, H.R. 955, by Rep. Sam Farr (D-CA) and Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI).

Leahy is the "father" of the national organic standards and labeling program and the author of the legislation that chartered the program in 1990. The initiative to repeal the anti-organic rider started when a provision was inserted into the fiscal year 2003 omnibus appropriations bill that would permit some livestock to be labeled "organic" even though the livestock products did not meet the strict criteria established by USDA. The rider was intended to benefit one Georgia producer, but it was written broadly enough that it essentially created a loophole for any livestock producer in the country to get around the organic feed requirement.

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