



Society for Nutrition Education Public Policy Legislative & Regulatory Bulletin May 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 President-Elect Meets with Senator Kohl's Staff to Discuss SNE's Position of Child Nutrition Reauthorization

In early May, SNE's President-elect Jane Voichick met with Ben Miller, Legislative Assistant, in the office of U.S. Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI). Sen. Kohl is the ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee, which funds federal nutrition programs. Sen. Kohl is a strong advocate of child nutrition programs. President-elect Voichick provided the office with an overview of SNE and communicated the society's Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) priorities based on the recently completed CNR position paper. In addition, she thanked Sen. Kohl and his staff for their continued interest in nutrition education and for introducing legislation to expand the school breakfast, and other important child and adult care feeding programs. [Additional information on this measure can be found on page two of this bulletin.]

Bill Offered in the U.S. Senate to Limit Sales in Schools of Sodas and Snacks

On Tuesday, May 6, Senators Patrick Leahy (D-VT) ranking Democratic member of the Senate Subcommittee on Research and Nutrition, of the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Richard Lugar (R-IN) introduced bipartisan legislation to allow the Secretary of Agriculture to more effectively restrict the sale of soft drinks and other foods of minimal nutritional value in schools that participate in the federal school lunch program. The legislation is known as the "Better Nutrition for School Children Act of 2003" (S. 1007).

Leahy introduced a similar measure in 2001, about the same time that a report to Congress compiled by the U.S. Department of Agriculture encouraged Congress to make statutory changes to promote the consumption of more nutritious foods on school grounds. The report concluded that only two percent of the nation's schoolchildren were meeting the Food Guide Pyramid serving recommendations for all five major food groups.

Current federal school lunch rules prohibit the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value, including soft drinks, in school cafeterias during the lunch hour. The Leahy-Lugar bill would allow the Agriculture Secretary to more broadly regulate sales of these empty-calorie foods throughout school grounds until the end of the school lunch period.

Leahy and Lugar intend to offer the sodas in schools bill during the Agriculture Committee's work on legislation reauthorizing child nutrition programs. Senators Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Chris Dodd (D-CT), and Jim Jeffords (I-VT) are cosponsors of the Leahy-Lugar bill. For more information on this bill, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:s.01007>.

Bipartisan IMPACT Bill to be Re-Introduced in the Senate

Senators Bill Frist (R-TN), Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), and Christopher Dodd (D-CT) have come to a final agreement on the Improved Nutrition and Physical Activity Act (IMPACT) reintroduction language for the 108th Congress. The bill is likely to be introduced sometime during the week of May 19.

SNE's Advisory Committee on Public Policy (ACPP) is responding to the upcoming introduction on the IMPACT bill by sending a support letter to Frist, Bingaman and Dodd's offices. SNE's letter supports the following key provisions included in the IMPACT bill:

1. Assisting local communities to promote good nutrition and increased levels of physical activity among their citizens through community interventions, school-based activities, and health care delivery programs.
2. Providing training for health professionals and health science students on how to identify those at risk for overweight and obesity and how to treat and prevent these conditions.
3. Asking the Department of Health and Human Services to summarize what research on overweight and obesity has revealed to date and to design a future research agenda.
4. Asking the Institute of Medicine to look at the federal government food supplement programs to ensure that they are a source for improved nutrition.
5. Collecting and analyzing data as part of the National Health and Nutrition Examination Study and other data sources.

Last February, Rep. Mary Bono (R-CA) introduced the House version of IMPACT (H.R. 716). The legislation calls to provide \$150 million to help schools develop nutritional programs and conduct campaigns to promote healthy habits among teens. As of May 15, the House bill had 41 bipartisan cosponsors. The House IMPACT bill can be found online at <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d108:h.r.00716>.

Senator Leahy Introduces Bill Promoting More Healthy Choices For Students

On Monday, May 5, Senator Leahy introduced a separate package of child nutrition programs -- which he will also offer on the child nutrition reauthorization bill -- aimed at educating children about the benefits of eating healthy and ensuring that schools have access to more healthy foods.

The measure, Child Nutrition Initiatives Act of 2003 (S. 995), includes provisions to reinstate funding for the Nutritional Education and Training (NET) Program, to secure funding for the successful WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program, to update the all-state minimum that guarantees all states a minimum amount of federal child nutrition funding, and to create a new farm-to-cafeteria program to supply locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables to school cafeterias. The bill does not have any cosponsors. It was referred to the Senate Agriculture Committee. [To review a copy of the bill go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c108:S.995>.]

Legislation Expanding the School Breakfast, Summer Food, Child and Adult Care Feeding Programs

On Wednesday, May 7, Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) introduced the "Child and Adult Care Food Program Improvements Act of 2003" (S. 1022), a major child nutrition initiative, consisting of three separate bills that expand three existing nutrition programs. The programs included in Kohl's initiative are the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program.

The first part of Kohl's initiative would increase the number of school breakfasts served throughout the country by creating competitive national school breakfast start-up and expansion grant programs.

Additionally, Kohl is proposing legislation to make more children eligible for the Summer Food Service Program, a program where the federal government provides cash subsidies and donates food commodities to local public and private nonprofit "service institutions" that run youth recreation programs, summer feeding projects and camps.

The third component of the initiative expands the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program. The program is used by both public and private nonprofit child care centers, and provides up to two meals and one snack per day to eligible children under the age of 12 in public and private day care homes. The legislation would make more children eligible by lowering income requirements and increasing the number of child care centers that can participate in the program.

Kohl's legislation comes as Congress prepares to debate the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act. For more information on this bill, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c108:S.1022>.

National Food Policy Conference Held in Washington, D.C.

The National Food Policy Conference, sponsored by the Consumer Federation of American was held in Washington, D.C. in early May. This conference, held annually each spring, is a national gathering for those interested in agriculture, food and nutrition policy. It explored the current food policy issues through a mix of policymakers, advocates and scientists.

Speakers at the conference included U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson as well as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Commissioner Mark McClellan, M.D. Secretary Thompson's speech is available online at <http://www.os.dhhs.gov/news/speech/2003/030508.html>. To view Commissioner McClellan's speech, go to <http://www.fda.gov/oc/speeches/2003/nfpc0508.html>.

In conjunction with the conference, the Golden Carrot Awards Reception was held on May 8th to honor key federal policymakers for advancing the consumer interest in food and agriculture policy during the previous year. This year, the Golden Carrot Awards were awarded to Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA) and Rep. John Dingell (D-MI).

