

**Sample letters to Congresswoman Biggert
to support the Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection bill**

SAMPLE #1

Dear Congresswoman Biggert,

I strongly urge you to cosponsor Representative Woolsey's "Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection" bill that would improve the nutritional quality of school foods by updating the definition of "foods of minimal nutritional value" to be consistent with current nutrition science. Nutrition science has evolved significantly since 1979, when USDA defined "foods of minimal nutritional value" (FMNV). Senators Arlene Specter and Tom Harkin are original cosponsors in the Senate.

As you know, over the last two decades, rates of obesity have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents. And children's poor diets are negatively affecting their health. Currently, low-nutrition foods are widely available outside of the school meals programs in vending machines, snack lines, and school stores. The most common items sold out of these venues are high in calories, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, refined sugars, or sodium, which contribute to health problems such as obesity, heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and tooth decay.

The federal government invests significant resources in the school meal programs and has strong nutrition standards for those meals. Selling low-nutrition foods through other venues in schools undermines that investment, undermines parents' ability to feed their children a healthy diet, and undermines children's health.

Again, I urge you to cosponsor the bill to update the definition of "food of minimal nutritional value." I look forward to hearing your position on this legislation to promote children's health.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE #2

Dear Congresswoman Biggert,

No matter how hard as parents we try to ensure that our children eat healthy meals, schools that offer sodas, candy, and fatty snacks and meals can undermine our best efforts. As a parent who cares deeply about my children and my nation's future, I urge you to cosponsor the "Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection" bill to be introduced by Senator Arlen Specter, Tom Harkin, and Representative Lynn Woolsey. These bills would remove junk food from our schools by updating and strengthening the nutrition standards for foods sold on school campuses outside of the federal school meal programs.

Currently, low-nutrition foods are widely available in school vending machines, cafeteria snack lines, at fundraisers and school stores. The most common items sold out of these venues are soda, other sugary drinks, candy, snack cakes, and chips. Over the last two decades, rates of obesity have doubled in children and tripled in teens. And children's poor diets are negatively affecting their health. Alarming, studies show that as a result of obesity-related diseases this generation is likely to be the first in centuries to have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. Improving school nutrition helps students learn - and doesn't hurt the bottom line. A study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Centers for Disease Control found that schools can switch to selling healthy foods and beverages without losing revenue.

The federal government invests significant resources in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs and has strong nutrition standards for those meals. Selling low-nutrition foods through other venues in schools undermines that investment, parents' ability to feed their children a healthy diet, and children's health.

I am sure you share my concern that all our children grow up to be strong, healthy and productive adults. Your support for children is very important to me and other parents in our state. Again, I urge you to cosponsor the "Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection" bill. I look forward to hearing your position on this legislation.

Sincerely,