Sample Testimony

Note: Highlighted fields are intended to be customized

Good afternoon. My name is [YOUR NAME] and I am speaking today as the parent of a child at [NAME OF YOUR CHILD’S SCHOOL] here in [NAME OF YOUR CITY, TOWN, OR COUNTY]. I would first like to thank the [GOVERNING BODY] for providing me with the opportunity to speak today about improving the nutritional quality of foods and beverages offered at our schools.

Ensuring students continue to have access to healthy school meals is more critical than ever. The school lunch program feeds [TOTAL] children every day - most from families in need. And given the downturn in the economy and high rates of unemployment from the pandemic, school meals may be the only meals some kids get, so they should be as nutritious as possible. Healthy school meals support kids who might not otherwise have access to nutritious food at home.

Students are at school to learn. Nutritious meals are critical to set kids on a path to success in the classroom and a lifetime of healthier eating habits. Our kids deserve the opportunity to succeed.

A common myth is that kids won't eat healthier meals, but schools can make meals that are both nutritious and appealing. Research shows schools with the healthiest meals have the highest participation, and kids are not throwing away more food now that meals are healthier.

While it’s clear that budgets are stretched, we shouldn't put a price on our kids' health and nutrition. Nutritious school lunches can play a vital role in helping our kids build lifelong healthy habits, which will save money on healthcare costs in the long run. Researchers estimate that by 2025, healthier school meals will decrease the number of childhood obesity cases by more than two million, save nearly $800 million in healthcare costs. A recent 2021 study found that school meals are the single most healthy source of nutrition for children—more nutritious than grocery stores, restaurants, worksites, and others.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to speak to you about improving the nutritional quality of foods and beverages offered at our schools.

***Sources:***

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Liu J, Micha R, Li Y, Mozaffarian D. Trends in Food Sources and Diet Quality Among US Children and Adults, 2003-2018. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2021;4(4):e215262. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.5262

U.S. Department of Agriculture. *School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study*; 2019. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-nutrition-and-meal-cost-study>. Accessed October 4, 2021.

***For more information, please contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest at policy@cspinet.org.***