



October 5, 2012

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We are writing to express our very strong support for the new nutrition guidelines for school meals being implemented under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

The National School Lunch Program is an important source of meals for over 31 million children nationwide, and of those children, 21 million get school lunch for free or at a reduced price. The National School Breakfast Program is also vital. They are the greatest opportunity to feed the nation's children a nutritionally balanced meal that is appropriate for their age and household income. Furthermore, we support the new nutrition guidelines because they are based on science. The recommendations, from the Institute of Medicine (IOM), are compatible with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* defined by the USDA and the Department of Health and Human Services and the IOM's *Dietary Reference Intakes*. We support the recommendation that establishes minimum and maximum amounts of calories for children in three age groups. The calorie ranges provide nutritionally proportionate meals that make school lunch a targeted approach to both childhood hunger and childhood obesity.

Not only are those calories better targeted, the calories will be more wholesome and nutritious because children will be served more fruits, vegetables and whole grains, only fat-free and low-fat milk, limits on unhealthy fats, and less salt. In addition, children are able to get extra servings of healthy fruits and vegetables.

We look forward to supporting schools throughout the nation to implement and promote the new, improved nutrition guidelines.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joel Berg". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Joel Berg
Executive Director
New York City Coalition Against Hunger

cc: Kevin Concannon, USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services
Dr. Janey Thornton, USDA Deputy Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services