



## FIRST FOCUS

### CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN

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June 10, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker John Boehner:

I am writing on behalf of First Focus Campaign for Children (FFCC), a national bipartisan advocacy organization dedicated to making children and their families a priority in federal policy and budget decisions, regarding the upcoming Fiscal Year 2015 Agriculture Appropriations legislation (H.R. 4800).

Federal child nutrition programs help alleviate hunger and improve child obesity rates, as both can be a consequence of inadequate diets and poor nutrition. Nearly one in five children in our country lives in a family that struggles to put food on the table throughout the year. Federal nutrition programs are effective investments that protect against hunger, improve nutrition, and promote health. Programs are specifically targeted to children and other vulnerable populations.

FFCC appreciates the U.S. House Appropriations Committee's efforts to fully fund child nutrition programs in the committee's bill, including the \$25 million for school meal equipment grants and \$27 million for summer food service pilots, but we oppose the FY2015 Agriculture Appropriations bill in its current form.

FFCC opposes efforts to use the appropriations process to change or weaken federal child nutrition programs. This includes efforts to alter or delay implementation of meal standards in the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program. If schools face budget constraints, Congress should ensure that schools have the resources to meet standards, not to lower the standards that protect children.

With over 90% of schools meeting the new standards and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) continuing to provide extensive technical assistance to schools, now is not the time to roll back the improvements to school meals. USDA has periodically made changes to the new standards when it made sense to allow schools to have more flexibility. The Department did this to make it easier for the standards to be successfully implemented by school food service directors and the staff that administer the programs, all while still working towards the goal of serving healthy food to all kids.

FFCC opposes efforts that take away USDA's authority to decide what fruits and vegetables are in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) food package. Because WIC is a supplemental program it is important that USDA rely on current science to decide what is lacking in this population's diet and only include those items. Women and children receive \$8-10 a month for the fruit and vegetable voucher and this money should be targeted towards the important nutrients that they are lacking.

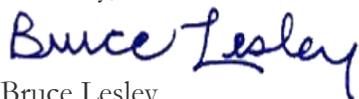
USDA is currently in the process of reviewing the WIC food package and FFCC supports this being completed before changes are made to the food package. The current WIC policy on white potatoes reflects

the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine, in keeping with WIC's long-standing commitment to science-based nutrition policy and should only be changed once the review is completed.

FFCC urges members of the United States House of Representatives to support amendments that would remove the above harmful provisions from the legislation. Without these changes FFCC does not support the legislation moving forward.

Child nutrition programs are vital tools in protecting against hunger and improving childhood obesity rates through providing balanced diets for all of our nation's children and the programs should be strengthened and built upon, rather than weakened.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Lesley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Bruce Lesley

President

First Focus Campaign for Children