



The School Milk Nutrition Act of 2015



H. R. 2407

THE PROBLEM: From 2012 to 2014, schools served 187 million *fewer* half-pints of milk, although total public school enrollment was growing. Children over four years old are *not* meeting the recommended daily servings of dairy in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA).

THE CHALLENGES: Fewer students are eating lunch in the cafeteria. Competing beverages with little or no nutritional content are sold in schools, and milk itself has changed. Flavored milk – the most popular variety in schools – must be fat-free, and many students may not like it as well as low-fat flavored milk (which is now banned), according to research.

THE PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN: Milk is the #1 source of nine essential nutrients in young Americans' diets, and provides multiple health benefits, including better bone health, lower blood pressure, and reduced risk of cardiovascular disease or type 2 diabetes. Milk is a source of three out of four under-consumed nutrients – calcium, potassium and vitamin D.

If school students are falling farther behind in dairy consumption, action is needed.

MOVING TOWARD SOLUTIONS: Legislative and regulatory innovations that increase average daily participation (ADP) in school meal programs helps since milk is offered with each school meal. But we need to do more. That is why NMPF supports the bipartisan **School Milk Nutrition Act (H. R. 2407)** sponsored by Rep. Glenn Thompson (R-PA) and Rep. Joe Courtney (D-CT). Please join the National Milk Producers Federation in supporting this legislation.

Support for the School Milk Nutrition Act of 2015 would –

- Renew milk's initial role in school meals by reaffirming the requirement that milk be offered with each meal, that varieties of milk be consistent with the DGA, and that substitute beverages be nutritionally equivalent to milk.
- Give schools the *option* of offering low-fat (1%) flavored milk, rather than only fat-free – but only if the milk contains no more than 150 calories per 8-ounce serving.
- Allow milk to be sold in the same age-appropriate container sizes as competing beverages.
- Establish a pilot program designed to increase milk consumption through expanded breakfast programs, a la carte sales, new outlets, etc., with a focus on improvements to packaging, refrigeration, flavors and merchandising.
- Encourage USDA to address the needs of lactose-intolerant students by offering extended shelf-stable lactose-free milk to the USDA Foods Program.
- Allow mothers in the WIC program to select reduced-fat milk (2%) for themselves or their children with a written request – the same standard as for substitute milk beverages. (Currently, USDA requires extensive evaluation and paperwork.)