



April 10, 2007

Dear Senator/Representative:

On behalf of Trust for America's Health (TFAH), a non-profit, non-partisan organization dedicated to saving lives by protecting the health of every community and working to make disease prevention a national priority, I would like to thank you for your leadership in protecting our nation's health. By introducing **S.771/H.R. 1363, the Child Nutrition Promotion and School Lunch Protection Act of 2007**, you address a very critical issue -- the obesity epidemic.

In our most recent report on obesity, *F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America 2006*, TFAH identified nutritional standards for school breakfast and lunches as "fat factors" contributing to the growing obesity rates among children. TFAH also conducted a survey of state Chronic Disease Directors (CDDs) in order to determine which obesity prevention strategies experts believe are most effective. The CDDs ranked school-based approaches, including improving the nutritional content of food in schools, as a top priority in combating childhood obesity. We are very pleased that your legislation addresses these issues.

Reports by GAO, USDA and independent researchers have all found the nutrition in school lunches to be "substandard." By directing the Secretary of Agriculture to update nutritional standards for foods sold in schools, and then to apply the updated definitions everywhere on school grounds and throughout the school day, S. 771/H.R. 1363 takes an important step towards improving the health of America's children. As you know, most school meal programs still focus on delivering minimum versus maximum nutrition to students. Only 16 states have set nutritional standards for competitive foods sold in schools, while only 20 limit the availability of such foods beyond federal requirements.

Again, I want to commend your leadership and thank you for introducing this very important public health bill. TFAH looks forward to working with you on this and other important public health initiatives in the future. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Richard Hamburg, our Director of Government Relations, at (202) 223-9876 or Jeremy Sharp at (202) 223-9870 x20.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Levi, PhD
Executive Director