Waste Not Want Not: The Case for School Lunch Reform

By Katherine Baker

Waste Not Want Not: The Case for School Lunch Reform 3

OBSERVATION 1. We offer the following DEFINITIONS. 3

Policy: 3

Substantial: 3

The federal school lunch program. School lunches are an $8.3 billion/year federal agricultural policy 3

HHFKA 3

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, the structure of the Status Quo. Two key FACTS 3

FACT 1. Federal control. 3

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act is a federal take-over of decision-making for parents and local governments on school lunches 3

FACT 2. The CEP, Community Eligibility Provision. 4

CEP gives free school lunches to all students regardless of income 4

OBSERVATION 3. We offer the following PLAN implemented by Congress, the President and the US Dept of Agriculture 4

OBSERVATION 4. The JUSTIFICATIONS 4

JUSTIFICATION 1. Hungry kids 4

Since HHFKA took effect, more children go hungry 4

JUSTIFICATION 2. Food waste. We see this in 3 sub points. 5

A. The Link: Massive waste. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act brought a 56% increase in school food waste 5

B. The Impact: Food waste costs $1 billion per year. 5

C. The Solution: Quit forcing kids to take food they don’t want 5

JUSTIFICATION 3. Healthier meals. 6

Children actually ate more fruits and vegetables before HHFKA took effect, than after 6

JUSTIFICATION 4. Rolling back misguided policies 6

The No Hungry Kids Act fixes the waste, hunger and mismanagement of the current system. 6

JUSTIFICATION 5. Welfare for the rich 7

Eliminating CEP eliminates welfare for the rich by giving free lunches only to poor students 7

2A Evidence: School Lunch Reform 8

DEFINITIONS & BACKGROUND 8

Entire Text of HR1363 8

Text of CEP – Scroll to section 104(a) of HHFKA link below (print out and bring to the round with you) 8

OPENING QUOTES / AFFIRMATIVE PHILOSOPHY 8

“We would eat our pencils” 8

INHERENCY 8

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act increased federal control of school lunch meals 8

CEP is section 104(a) of HHFKA. Mandates free lunch for all students in high poverty areas 9

MINOR REPAIR RESPONSES 9

A/T “Longer school lunch break” – longer school day 9

A/T “Longer school lunch break” – Less class time 9

A/T “Recess before lunch” – More study needed 9

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE 10

Rules send food to garbage 10

Taxpayer dollars thrown in the trash 10

Los Angeles Unified: $100,000 worth of food waste each day 10

Consumption decreased, Waste increased 10

Despite attempts, FV [fruit and vegetable] portions still uneaten 11

Waste ‘heartbreakingly common’ 11

‘Astounding’ food waste 11

Even Advocates admit problem 11

A/T “Children eating more FV”: Small Study 12

Not enough calories for impoverished children – more kids go hungry under HHFKA 12

Active teens need more calories than allotted under HHFKA 12

Huge Cost to schools when kids opt out because they don’t like the food 13

Struggles in implementation and 1 million kids stopped eating it 13

48 states report food waste struggles 13

Kids stop buying school lunches 13

HHFKA means more kids go hungry 14

Hungry children left with less 14

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY 14

No Hungry Kids Act helps students 14

School Nutrition Association agrees – HHFKA requirements need to be reformed 14

Need to stop forcing students to take food they don’t want, and then throw it out 15

Many US Schools Agree: You can tell because they’re dropping out of the school lunch program since HHFKA 15

Schools pulling out because of HHFKA 15

DISAVANTAGE RESPONSES 16

A/T “Unhealthy meals” - Requiring fruit and vegetables does not equal increased F&V consumption 16

A/T “HHFKA Reduces Obesity” - Decline in obesity not guaranteed; turn, it may make obesity worse 16

A/T “HHFKA Reduces Obesity” - School meals not cause of obesity 16

A/T “Health Benefits Lost” – Health benefits not realized in Status Quo 16

Works Cited: School Lunch Reform 17

Waste Not Want Not: The Case for School Lunch Reform

If you grew up attending public schools, perhaps you remember school lunches. And if you had to eat them, you have our sympathies. 30 million children per day eat them today… or at least try to. Or are supposed to. Or maybe they don’t. At the end of today’s round, if you don’t think school lunches could get any worse by being reformed, we’ll ask you to join us as we affirm that The United States federal government should substantially reform its agriculture and/or food safety policy in the United States.

OBSERVATION 1. We offer the following DEFINITIONS.

Policy:

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2016 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy>

“a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body”

Substantial:

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary, copyright 2016 <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantially>

“large in amount, size or number”

The federal school lunch program. School lunches are an $8.3 billion/year federal agricultural policy

UCLA Health Impact Assessment Clearinghouse Learning & Information Center 2008. “Agriculture” (ethical note about the date: article is undated but references material published in 2008 and none later) <http://www.hiaguide.org/sectors-and-causal-pathways/sectors/agriculture>

Another important piece of federal agriculture policy is the federal school lunch program.  Growing out of a program established in the 1930s to take surplus food commodities out of the marketplace and thus reduce downward pressure on prices paid to farmers, the school lunch program now helps provide more than 30 million lunches to school children each day at a cost of $8.3 billion per year.

HHFKA

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, a federal law passed in 2010 that took effect in 2012.

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, the structure of the Status Quo. Two key FACTS

FACT 1. Federal control.

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act is a federal take-over of decision-making for parents and local governments on school lunches

Rachel Sheffield and Daren Bakst, 2016 (Sheffield - focuses on welfare, marriage and family, and education as policy analyst in the DeVos Center for Religion & Civil Society at The Heritage Foundation. Bakst - Research Fellow in Agricultural Policy at the Heritage Foundation) “Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Time for Serious Reform, Not Tinkering” May 26, 2016 <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/05/child-nutrition-reauthorization-time-for-serious-reform-not-tinkering>

The primary question regarding nutrition standards is actually not about nutrition at all; rather, the question is whether the federal government should dictate a strict one-size-fits-all approach for schools participating in the meal programs or local governments and parents should make these decisions. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 developed a restrictive federal approach. The standards are extremely prescriptive and provide little flexibility for schools. There are calorie limits, minutely detailed nutritional requirements, and portion size restrictions.

FACT 2. The CEP, Community Eligibility Provision.

CEP gives free school lunches to all students regardless of income

Rachel Sheffield and Daren Bakst, 2016 (Sheffield - focuses on welfare, marriage and family, and education as policy analyst in the DeVos Center for Religion & Civil Society at The Heritage Foundation. Bakst - Research Fellow in Agricultural Policy at the Heritage Foundation; studies and writes about agricultural and environmental policy and property rights, among other issues) “Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Time for Serious Reform, Not Tinkering” May 26, 2016 <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/05/child-nutrition-reauthorization-time-for-serious-reform-not-tinkering>

Through generous federal subsidies, CEP encourages schools to provide free meals to all students regardless of income level if certain criteria are met. If at least 40 percent of students in a school, a group of schools, or a school district are identified as eligible for free meals because they receive a benefit from another means-tested welfare program like food stamps (a measure referred to as the Identified Student Percentage or ISP), then all of the students can receive free meals.

OBSERVATION 3. We offer the following PLAN implemented by Congress, the President and the US Dept of Agriculture

1. Congress votes to pass H.R 1363, the No Hungry Kids Act, which will  
A) nullify the 2012 USDA school lunch nutrition rules  
B) prohibit the minimum nutritional requirements for school lunches from being construed as a calorie maximum   
C) stop prohibiting a child from eating a lunch provided by the child's parent or guardian.

2. CEP (section 104(a) of HHFKA) is repealed.  
3. Funding is existing budgets of existing agencies, net reduction in spending thanks to CEP repeal.  
4. Plan takes effect 2 days after an affirmative ballot.

5. Enforcement through existing agencies, through existing means as before the current rules were enacted.  
6. Affirmative speeches may clarify the plan as needed.

OBSERVATION 4. The JUSTIFICATIONS

JUSTIFICATION 1. Hungry kids

Since HHFKA took effect, more children go hungry

Susan Joy Clark, 2012 (Clark is a reporter for NewJersey.com. NewJersey.com is a digital news content provider and website in New Jersey. According to a report in the New York Times in 2012, it is the largest provider of digital news in the state. NJ.com provides content for numerous publications NJ.com's news reports are widely quoted by other news publications such as the New York Daily News, the Chicago Tribune, the Washington Post, and other news organizations around the nation.) “Does the Hunger-Free Kids Act actually do what it purports to do?” October 4, 2012 <http://www.northjersey.com/opinion/does-the-hunger-free-kids-act-actually-do-what-it-purports-to-do-1.504862>

The goal of the federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act passed in 2010 and taking effect this school year was to feed hungry children during school hours who may not get enough to eat at home while simultaneously battling childhood obesity. It appears the two issues are at opposite ends of the spectrum, but the federal plan claims to address both. The solution — smaller lunches at higher prices. The results — hungry and unhappy students. Children who were not hungry before are hungry now and children who were hungry before are even more hungry now.

JUSTIFICATION 2. Food waste. We see this in 3 sub points.

A. The Link: Massive waste. The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act brought a 56% increase in school food waste

WASHINGTON POST 2015 (journalist Ariana Eunjung Cha; previously served as the Post's bureau chief in Shanghai and San Francisco) “Why the healthy school lunch program is in trouble. Before/after photos of what students ate.” August 26, 2015 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/to-your-health/wp/2015/08/26/schoolchildren-are-tossing-an-average-of-more-than-a-third-cup-of-fruits-and-veggies-in-the-trash-each-lunch/>

The design of the experiment was simple. In the spring of 2012, before the USDA mandate went into effect, researchers visited two elementary schools and assigned each third-, fourth- and fifth-grader a number and took digital pictures of their trays before and after they ate and then went back and tried to quantify what was eaten and what was thrown away. Then they repeated the experiment the following school year which was the first year of the new requirement. What they found was worrisome on several fronts. Because they were forced to do it, children took fruits and vegetables -- 29 percent more in fact. But their consumption of fruits and vegetables actually went down 13 percent after the mandate took effect and, worse, they were throwing away a distressing 56 percent more than before.

B. The Impact: Food waste costs $1 billion per year.

Teresa Watanabe, 2014 (Watanabe reports for the Los Angeles Times, a paid daily newspaper published in Los Angeles, California, since 1881.) “Solutions sought to reduce food waste at schools” April 1, 2014 http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-lausd-waste-20140402-story.html

Nationally, the cost of wasted food overall — including milk, meats and grains — is estimated at more than $1 billion annually. A U.S. General Accountability Office survey released in January found that 48 of 50 states reported that food waste and higher costs have been their top challenges in rolling out the 2012 rules.

C. The Solution: Quit forcing kids to take food they don’t want

Michelle Malkin 2014 (journalist ) 21 May 2014 “Michelle Obama’s Control-Freak Lunch Program” NATIONAL REVIEW <http://www.nationalreview.com/article/378436/michelle-obamas-control-freak-lunch-program-michelle-malkin>

Draconian federal rules dictate calorie counts, whole-grain requirements, the number of items that children must put on their trays, and even the color of the fruits and vegetables they must choose. Asked for a solution, LAUSD [Los Angeles Unified School District] food-service director David Binkle told the Times bluntly: “We can stop forcing children to take food they don’t like and throw in the garbage.”

JUSTIFICATION 3. Healthier meals.

Children actually ate more fruits and vegetables before HHFKA took effect, than after

Sarah A. Amin, Bethany A. Yon, Jennifer C. Taylor, Rachel K. Johnson, 2015 (Amin: MPH, Univ of Vermont Burlington, Dept of Nutrition and Food Sciences, Burlington, VT. Yon: PhD, Univ of Vermont Burlington, Dept of Nutrition and Food Sciences, Burlington, VT. Taylor: MS, Univ of California, Dept of Nutrition, Davis, CA. Johnson: PhD, MPH, RD, Univ of California, Dept of Nutrition, Davis, CA) “Impact of the National School Lunch Program on Fruit and Vegetable Selection in Northeastern Elementary Schoolchildren, 2012–2013” Sept–Oct 2015 <http://www.publichealthreports.org/issueopen.cfm?articleID=3386> [Brackets added]

When FVs were optional, 15.7% (95% confidence interval [CI] 8.6, 22.8) of lunch trays did not contain FVs, compared with 2.5% (95% CI –0.5, 5.5) when FVs were required (p,0.001) (Figure). When students were required to select FVs, the mean amount of FVs on children’s trays increased by 0.20 cups (p,0.001). When we excluded trays where children did not select any FVs (pre- and post-new rule), the mean amount of FVs that children selected increased once required by 0.09 cups (p50.001) (Table). Research associates could not determine consumption for 2% and 9% of lunch trays before and after the new rule, respectively, due to missing evidence from inedible food portions or visual obstructions on the trays. While the amount of FVs [Fruits and vegetables] selected increased when the USDA required schoolchildren to include them on their lunch trays, more children did not consume any of their selections (4% FV optional vs. 12% FV required, p,0.001). On average, children consumed fewer FVs (0.06 cup or about 1 tablespoon, p50.01) and wasted more FVs (0.14 cup or about 2 tablespoons, p,0.001) when FVs were required compared with when they were optional

JUSTIFICATION 4. Rolling back misguided policies

The No Hungry Kids Act fixes the waste, hunger and mismanagement of the current system.

Rep. Steve King and Rep. Tim Huelskamp, 2012 (Reps. Steve King (R-Iowa) and Tim Huelskamp (R-Kansas) King and Huelskamp both serve on the House Agriculture Committee.) “'Let's Move' law is flawed. 'No Hungry Kids Act' will fix it” September 27, 2012 <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/education/258835-lets-move-law-is-flawed-no-hungry-kids-act-will-fix-it>

The concern over the health and future of our children is the exact reason why we have introduced the "No Hungry Kids Act." The "No Hungry Kids Act" repeals the USDA rule that created the new standards, prohibits the USDA's upper caloric limits, and will protect rights of parents to send their children to school with the foods of their choice. The goal of the school lunch program was - and still should be - to ensure students receive enough nutrition to be healthy and to learn. The misguided nanny state, as advanced by Michelle Obama's "Healthy and Hunger Free Kids Act," was interpreted by USDA Secretary Vilsack to be a directive that, because some kids are overweight, every child should be put on a diet. Parents know that their kids deserve all of the healthy and nutritious food they want. The USDA's new school lunch guidelines are a perfect example of what is wrong with government: more spending, misguided inputs, tremendous waste, and unaccomplished goals. Thanks to the Nutrition Nannies at the USDA, America's children are going hungry at school today. This is no way to educate the leaders of tomorrow.

JUSTIFICATION 5. Welfare for the rich

Eliminating CEP eliminates welfare for the rich by giving free lunches only to poor students

Rachel Sheffield and Daren Bakst, 2016 (Sheffield - focuses on welfare, marriage and family, and education as policy analyst in the DeVos Center for Religion & Civil Society at The Heritage Foundation. Bakst - Research Fellow in Agricultural Policy at the Heritage Foundation) “Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Time for Serious Reform, Not Tinkering” May 26, 2016 <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/05/child-nutrition-reauthorization-time-for-serious-reform-not-tinkering>

**Eliminate CEP.** This provision expands school meal assistance beyond its intended population. The elimination of CEP would have no impact on the eligibility of low-income students to receive free and reduced-priced meals.  Eliminating CEP would ensure that free meals are going only to students who are low-income. This change would reduce the number of free meals offered by schools. The purpose, however, is not to provide as many meals as possible regardless of who receives them, but rather to provide meals to students who are low-income. CEP appears to be a backdoor approach to move toward a universal school meal program. The school meal programs, as has been long-standing policy, properly differentiate between those who are low-income and those who are not. CEP gets around this for some schools by manipulating data through artificial and unsubstantiated means to give all students free meals in those schools. Congress needs to eliminate these means of data manipulation that improperly give free meals to students of middle-class and wealthy families, including ISP thresholds, grouping schools to determine eligibility for all the schools, and the use of a multiplier.

2A Evidence: School Lunch Reform

DEFINITIONS & BACKGROUND

Entire Text of HR1363

H.R. 1363 text, 2015. (written by Rep Steve King of Iowa) <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/1363/text>

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.  
This Act may be cited as the “No Hungry Kids Act”.  
SEC. 2. REPEAL OF RULE.  
The rule prescribed by the Food and Nutrition Service of the Department of Agriculture relating to nutrition standards in the national school lunch and school breakfast programs published on January 26, 2012 (77 Fed. Reg. 4088 et seq.), and revising parts 210 and 220 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, shall have no force or effect.  
SEC. 3. LIMITS ON CERTAIN NUTRITIONAL REQUIREMENTS.  
Section 9(a)(1)(A)(i) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act ([42 U.S.C. 1758(a)(1)(A)(i)](http://uscode.house.gov/quicksearch/get.plx?title=42&section=1758)) is amended by inserting before the semicolon the following: “, to establish a calorie maximum for individual school lunches, or to prohibit a child from eating a lunch provided by the child’s parent or legal guardian”.

Text of CEP – Scroll to section 104(a) of HHFKA link below (print out and bring to the round with you)

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/s3307/text>

OPENING QUOTES / AFFIRMATIVE PHILOSOPHY

“We would eat our pencils”

Caroline May 2012 (journalist) DAILY CALLER 22 Sept 2012 “Nation’s children push back against Michelle Obama-backed school lunch regs” <http://dailycaller.com/2012/09/22/nations-children-push-back-against-michelle-obama-backed-school-lunch-regs/>

“This year, we’ll be hungry by 2:00,” one student, Zach Eck, told [KAKETV](http://www.kake.com/mobi/news?storyid=169542726&form=n&showPrev=y&page=1) in Kansas. “We would eat our pencils at school if they had nutritional value.”

INHERENCY

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act increased federal control of school lunch meals

Rachel Sheffield and Daren Bakst, 2016 (Sheffield - focuses on welfare, marriage and family, and education as policy analyst in the DeVos Center for Religion & Civil Society at The Heritage Foundation. Bakst - Research Fellow in Agricultural Policy at the Heritage Foundation; studies and writes about agricultural and environmental policy and property rights, among other issues) “Child Nutrition Reauthorization: Time for Serious Reform, Not Tinkering” May 26, 2016 <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2016/05/child-nutrition-reauthorization-time-for-serious-reform-not-tinkering>

Congress is currently working on reauthorizing the federal child nutrition programs, which include school meal programs. The last time Congress reauthorized these programs, it passed the controversial Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, a major priority for President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act made a number of significant changes in the child nutrition programs. This paper focuses on two of these changes. The increasing federal control of school meals through the nutrition standards and The expansion of eligibility for school meals to include many middle- and high-income households.

CEP is section 104(a) of HHFKA. Mandates free lunch for all students in high poverty areas

Abt Associates under contract with US Dept of Agriculture 2014. “Community Eligibility Provision Evaluation” Feb 2014 <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED557961>

Section 104(a) of the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010 made the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) available to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and schools in high poverty areas. Under the CEP, families are not required to submit applications for free or reduced price (FRP) meals, and schools must provide free lunch and breakfast to all students.

MINOR REPAIR RESPONSES

A/T “Longer school lunch break” – longer school day

Barbie Carpenter, Updated 2015 (Carpenter worked as a technical writer and editor in the defense industry for six years. She also served as a newspaper feature page editor and nationally syndicated columnist for the Hearst Corp. Carpenter holds a Bachelor of Science in journalism from the University of Florida and a graduate certificate in professional writing from the University of Central Florida) “Pros & Cons of Longer School Lunches” Last Updated: Jun 26, 2015 <http://www.livestrong.com/article/525829-pros-cons-of-longer-school-lunches/>

Adding to the school lunch time can add to the school day if administrators are not willing to cut time in other ways. A longer school day leaves students less time after school for physical activity, which is another important component in keeping students at a healthy weight. In addition, a longer school day might lead to burnout among students and, ultimately, make that extra lunch time simply not worth it.

A/T “Longer school lunch break” – Less class time

Barbie Carpenter, Updated 2015 (Carpenter worked as a technical writer and editor in the defense industry for six years. She also served as a newspaper feature page editor and nationally syndicated columnist for the Hearst Corp. Carpenter holds a Bachelor of Science in journalism from the University of Florida and a graduate certificate in professional writing from the University of Central Florida) “Pros & Cons of Longer School Lunches” Last Updated: Jun 26, 2015 <http://www.livestrong.com/article/525829-pros-cons-of-longer-school-lunches/>

Extending the school lunch time, without extending the school day, means that academics will take a hit. Students will spend more time in the cafeteria and less time in the classroom. While this might be beneficial for their social skills, it will not help them in their academics. Teachers will have to fit their current lesson plans into shorter classes, which can be challenging and make covering material difficult.

A/T “Recess before lunch” – More study needed

Christopher Wanjek, 2015 (science journalist; column, Bad Medicine, appears regularly on Live Science. Stories and editorial commentary are typically syndicated to major news outlets, such as Yahoo!, MSNBC, AOL, and Fox News.) “Are Healthy School Lunch Programs a Waste?” 7 Oct 2015 <http://www.livescience.com/52408-healthy-school-lunch-food-waste.html> [Brackets in original]

Just and his colleague Joseph Price, an associate professor at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, found that scheduling recess before the seated lunchtime, instead of after, similarly increased the students' consumption of fruits and vegetables. When recess playtime comes after eating, "[the children] have an incentive to rush through lunch," Just said. The researchers on the Harvard-led study, which includes members of the Boston-based anti-hunger nonprofit Project Bread, wrote that the new lunch nutrition guidelines are surely bringing healthier foods to schoolkids. More research is needed, however, to maximize the efficiency of the program.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

Rules send food to garbage

Teresa Watanabe, 2014 (journalist) LOS ANGELES TIMES “Solutions sought to reduce food waste at schools” April 1, 2014 <http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-lausd-waste-20140402-story.html> (brackets added)

But under federal school meal rules finalized in 2012, Parrish and other students must take at least three items — including one fruit or vegetable — even if they don't want them. Otherwise, the federal government won't reimburse school districts for the meals. "What can we do about this?" [school food services director David] Binkle says. "We can stop forcing children to take food they don't like and throw in the garbage."

Taxpayer dollars thrown in the trash

B. Christopher Agee, 2014 (journalist) “$4 Million In Food Thrown Away Every Day Under Michelle’s School Lunch Program” September 23, 2014 <http://www.westernjournalism.com/4-million-food-thrown-away-every-day-michelles-school-lunch-program/>

According to a WCPO report, new federal guidelines endorsed by Michelle Obama and implemented through the Department of Agriculture are costing schools – and, in turn, taxpayers – millions of dollars daily. While the law forces the USDA to spend about $12 billion – or roughly double the amount allotted in 2000 – on the program, kids are increasingly tossing out the fruits and vegetables now mandated to appear on cafeteria trays regardless of their reception. A whopping 81.2 percent of schools contacted by the National School Nutrition Association reported a spike in lunches that now end up in the trash as a direct result of the nutrition regulations. Cornell and Brigham Young universities looked at the data and determined an astounding $4 million in food is wasted each day in lunchrooms across the nation. In one district alone–California’s Los Angeles Unified School District–the program is resulting in six-digit daily revenue loss.

Los Angeles Unified: $100,000 worth of food waste each day

Teresa Watanabe, 2014 (journalist) LOS ANGELES TIMES “Solutions sought to reduce food waste at schools” April 1, 2014 <http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-lausd-waste-20140402-story.html>

It's lunchtime at Washington Preparatory High School in Los Angeles, but 16-year-old Parrish Jackson has barely touched her turkey burger and apricots. She's dumping them into the trash can. The apricots are "sour," the junior says. The meat is "nasty." If it were up to her, she would just have taken the potato wedges — they're close enough to fries — then headed to the student store to fuel up on hot Cheetos and juice. And so it goes on hundreds of campuses in Los Angeles Unified, the nation's second-largest school system, which serves 650,000 meals a day. Students throw out at least $100,000 worth of food a day — and probably far more, according to estimates by David Binkle, the district's food services director. That amounts to $18 million a year — based on a conservative estimate of 10% food waste — which Binkle says would be far better spent on higher-quality items, such as strawberries or watermelon.

Consumption decreased, Waste increased

Ariana Eunjung Cha, 2015 (journalist) WASHINGTON POST “Why the healthy school lunch program is in trouble. Before/after photos of what students ate.” August 26, 2015 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/to-your-health/wp/2015/08/26/schoolchildren-are-tossing-an-average-of-more-than-a-third-cup-of-fruits-and-veggies-in-the-trash-each-lunch/> [Brackets in original]

What they found was worrisome on several fronts. Because they were forced to do it, children took fruits and vegetables -- 29 percent more in fact. But their consumption of fruits and vegetables actually went down 13 percent after the mandate took effect and, worse, they were throwing away a distressing 56 percent more than before. The waste each child (or tray) was producing went from a quarter of a cup to more than a 39 percent of a cup each meal. In many cases, the researchers wrote, "children did not even taste the [fruits and vegetables] they chose at lunch."

Despite attempts, FV [fruit and vegetable] portions still uneaten

B. Christopher Agee, 2014 (journalist) “$4 Million In Food Thrown Away Every Day Under Michelle’s School Lunch Program” September 23, 2014 <http://www.westernjournalism.com/4-million-food-thrown-away-every-day-michelles-school-lunch-program/>

Other districts are trying to find new ways to give kids meals they will find palatable. Amy Merda, food service director for Canton Local Schools in Ohio, touted the addition of a former chef to her staff. The result has produced lunches students are more likely to eat; however, the ever-unpopular vegetable and fruit portions of the meals are still generally left uneaten.

Waste ‘heartbreakingly common’

Ariana Eunjung Cha, 2015 (journalist) WASHINGTON POST “Why the healthy school lunch program is in trouble. Before/after photos of what students ate.” August 26, 2015 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/to-your-health/wp/2015/08/26/schoolchildren-are-tossing-an-average-of-more-than-a-third-cup-of-fruits-and-veggies-in-the-trash-each-lunch/>

In a study published Tuesday in Public Health Reports, researcher Sarah Amin reports that such waste has become heartbreakingly common since the Agriculture Department rolled out new requirements in the 2012 school year that mandated that children who were taking part in the federal lunch program choose either a fruit or vegetable with their meals. The USDA mandate -- championed by first lady Michelle Obama -- has been highly controversial. Some school officials had warned that picky eaters would just throw the additional food away, but proponents said they should give kids more credit and that they would make the right choice with some nudging.

‘Astounding’ food waste

B. Christopher Agee, 2014 (journalist) “$4 Million In Food Thrown Away Every Day Under Michelle’s School Lunch Program” September 23, 2014 <http://www.westernjournalism.com/4-million-food-thrown-away-every-day-michelles-school-lunch-program/>

According to a WCPO report, new federal guidelines endorsed by Michelle Obama and implemented through the Department of Agriculture are costing schools – and, in turn, taxpayers – millions of dollars daily. While the law forces the USDA to spend about $12 billion – or roughly double the amount allotted in 2000 – on the program, kids are increasingly tossing out the fruits and vegetables now mandated to appear on cafeteria trays regardless of their reception. A whopping 81.2 percent of schools contacted by the National School Nutrition Association reported a spike in lunches that now end up in the trash as a direct result of the nutrition regulations. Cornell and Brigham Young universities looked at the data and determined an astounding $4 million in food is wasted each day in lunchrooms across the nation. In one district alone–California’s Los Angeles Unified School District–the program is resulting in six-digit daily revenue loss.

Even Advocates admit problem

B. Christopher Agee, 2014 (Reporter for Western Journalism Center, founded in 1991 by Joseph Farah and James H. Smith. Based in Sacramento, California, the center produces a popular conservative newsletter.) “$4 Million In Food Thrown Away Every Day Under Michelle’s School Lunch Program” September 23, 2014 <http://www.westernjournalism.com/4-million-food-thrown-away-every-day-michelles-school-lunch-program/>

The result has caused even those who agree with the program in principle to criticize its results. Ohio School Nutrition Association member Jeni Lange called the concept “just wonderful,” but noted that “it’s going to be a waste” if the students are unwilling to eat what they are served.

A/T “Children eating more FV”: Small Study

Kimberly Leonard, 2015(Kimberly Leonard is a health care reporter for the News division at U.S. News. Previously she worked in Health Rankings as a multimedia producer and reporter.) “Advocates, States Take a Bite Out of School Nutrition Law” March 13, 2015 http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/03/13/advocates-states-take-a-bite-out-of-school-nutrition-law

A study conducted by the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at the University of Connecticut published earlier this month in "Childhood Obesity" showed that children in schools are eating more fruit, and that they are throwing away less of their lunch. The study showed the percent of students choosing fruit with lunch increased from 54 percent to 66 percent. Students also are eating 84 percent of their healthier entrees, up from 71 percent in 2012. But the study was limited to 12 schools in one district. Anecdotally, many education professionals say they still see a lot of waste. Students have held boycotts against cafeterias, and often post photos of their lunches on Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #ThanksMichelleObama. Some depict healthy, tasty-looking meals. Others are sarcastic. "It's only good nutrition if you're eating it," points out Carol Weekly, director of child nutrition for Queen Creek Unified School District in Arizona. Some students are forgoing the program in favor of bringing their own Lunchable, she says.

Not enough calories for impoverished children – more kids go hungry under HHFKA

Prof. Craig Gundersen, 2014 (Univ of Illinois professor in Dept of Agricultural and Consumer Economics and executive director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory.) “The Potentially Negative Consequences Associated with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act” August 12, 2014 <http://policymatters.illinois.edu/the-potentially-negative-consequences-associated-with-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act/>

On the surface, this restructuring of the NSLP seems like a good idea. After all, who is against healthier meals? However, concerns exist regarding what might happen to childhood hunger in the United States due to these new rules. The following are three probable consequences of the policy changes for consideration. First, schools are faced with higher expenses due to these requirements and declines in participation among students and, hence, fewer meals sold. In response, some schools have chosen to opt out of the NSLP so they do not need to abide by the new rules. In the process of doing so, NSLP-eligible children who attend these schools will no longer have access to free or reduced-price meals, putting them at heightened risk of food insecurity. Second, children may be less likely to eat what is served through the revised guidelines and, hence, a decline in the receipt of school meals. This is consistent with a study that showed a marked decline in milk consumption after flavored milk was removed from some school meal programs due to the perceived negative characteristics of flavored milk and, as a consequence, the health benefits associated with milk consumption were not realized. Something similar is likely to occur when “healthier meals” are introduced. Third, for many students, the main meal they eat might be lunch due to limited food availability at home. Children with sufficient food at home can make up for the reductions in calories of the new school lunches but this is not an option for many low-income children. As a consequence, these children will be more likely to be food insecure and/or put greater demands on their family’s already limited food budget.

Active teens need more calories than allotted under HHFKA

Susan Joy Clark, 2012 (Clark is a reporter for NewJersey.com. NewJersey.com is a digital news content provider and website in New Jersey. According to a report in the New York Times in 2012, it is the largest provider of digital news in the state. NJ.com provides content for numerous publications NJ.com's news reports are widely quoted by other news publications such as the New York Daily News, the Chicago Tribune, the Washington Post, and other news organizations around the nation.) “Does the Hunger-Free Kids Act actually do what it purports to do?” October 4, 2012 <http://www.northjersey.com/opinion/does-the-hunger-free-kids-act-actually-do-what-it-purports-to-do-1.504862>

According to general guidelines, teens between the ages of 14 and 18 years old (high school students) need extra calories because of growth spurts during these muscle-building years. The 800-calorie high school lunch seems to be a drop in the bucket for very active female teens who need 2,800 to 3,000 calories per day (1,700 to 1,800 if very sedentary); or for the very active male teens who need 3,300 to 4,000 calories per day (2,100 to 2,500 per day for very sedentary male teens.)

Huge Cost to schools when kids opt out because they don’t like the food

Courtney Coren, 2013 (Reporter for Newsmax Media, commonly called Newsmax, is a conservative[1] American news media organization founded by Christopher Ruddy and based in West Palm Beach, Florida. It operates the news website Newsmax.com, publishes the Franklin Prosperity Report and Newsmax magazine, and runs a conservative cable news channel Newsmax TV ) “Schools Quit Michelle Obama's Lunch Program As They Lose Money” 29 Aug 2013 <http://www.newsmax.com/US/obama-healthy-lunch-program/2013/08/29/id/522944/>

As a result, more and more kids are opting out of the healthier lunch program and either choosing to pack their own lunches or even not eating at all. Since schools are not serving enough of the healthier lunches, they are losing the reimbursement money needed to offset their costs. Superintendent Gary Lewis of Catlin, Ill., told the Associated Press that his district lost $30,000 during the last school year because of the program. "Some of the stuff we had to offer, they wouldn't eat," Lewis said. "So you sit there and watch the kids, and you know they're hungry at the end of the day, and that led to some behavior and some lack of attentiveness." The Voorheesville School District in Voorheesville, N.Y., says that it lost $30,000 in three months after kids stopped buying the lunches, ABC 2 News reports. Add the Laguna Beach Unified School District in Laguna Beach, Calif., to that list. It has announced that they are abandoning the healthier lunch program due to lost money, CBS News reports.

Struggles in implementation and 1 million kids stopped eating it

Elizabeth Harrington, 2014 (Elizabeth Harrington is a staff writer for the Washington Free Beacon, an American politically conservative political journalism website that publishes news and opinion commentary.) “1M kids stop school lunch due to Michelle Obama’s standards” March 6, 2014 <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/mar/6/1m-kids-stop-school-lunch-due-michelle-obamas-stan/>

New school lunch standards implemented as a result of First Lady Michelle Obama’s anti-obesity campaign have led to more than 1 million children leaving the lunch line, according to a new report. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) released a wide-ranging audit of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act nutrition standards last week, finding 48 out of 50 states faced challenges complying with Mrs. Obama’s Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. The new standards led to kids throwing out their fruits and vegetables, student boycotts, higher lunch costs, and odd food pairings such as “cheese stick with shrimp” in order for schools to comply with the complicated rules. The National School Lunch Program saw a sharp decline in participation once the healthy standards went into effect during the 2012-2013 school year. A total of 1,086,000 students stopped buying school lunch, after participation had increased steadily for nearly a decade. The report found that 321 districts left the National School Lunch Program altogether, many of which cited the new standards as a factor.

48 states report food waste struggles

Elizabeth Harrington, 2014 (staff writer for the Washington Free Beacon) “1M kids stop school lunch due to Michelle Obama’s standards” March 6, 2014 <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/mar/6/1m-kids-stop-school-lunch-due-michelle-obamas-stan/>

Unappetizing food led to the biggest problem school officials faced: food waste. “Students may take the food components they are required to as part of the school lunch but then choose not to eat them,” the GAO said. As a result, 48 out of 50 states cited waste as a challenge. “In our lunch period observations in 7 of 17 schools, we saw many students throw away some or all of their fruits and vegetables,” the GAO said.

Kids stop buying school lunches

Elizabeth Harrington, 2014 (staff writer for the Washington Free Beacon, an American politically conservative political journalism website that publishes news and opinion commentary.) “1M kids stop school lunch due to Michelle Obama’s standards” March 6, 2014 <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014/mar/6/1m-kids-stop-school-lunch-due-michelle-obamas-stan/>

The law mandated that schools increase the price of school lunches, causing students to stop buying “because they felt they were being asked to pay more for less food.” Kids who pay full price for meals declined by 10 percent last school year, the lowest rate in over a decade.

HHFKA means more kids go hungry

Susan Joy Clark, 2012 (journalist) “Does the Hunger-Free Kids Act actually do what it purports to do?” October 4, 2012 <http://www.northjersey.com/opinion/does-the-hunger-free-kids-act-actually-do-what-it-purports-to-do-1.504862>

The federal government’s solution that one meal plan fits all is all wrong. If all families were equal the solution would be for parents to pack a lunch for their children to eat at school. Unfortunately that would not address the issue of needy families who rely on the school lunches and breakfast for half or more than half of their child’s daily calorie intake. So, in conclusion – lunches are smaller, they are more expensive and children are hungry.

Hungry children left with less

Steve King and Tim Huelskamp, 2012 (Reps. Steve King (R-Iowa) and Tim Huelskamp (R-Kansas) King and Huelskamp both serve on the House Agriculture Committee.) “'Let's Move' law is flawed. 'No Hungry Kids Act' will fix it” September 27, 2012 <http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/education/258835-lets-move-law-is-flawed-no-hungry-kids-act-will-fix-it>

The bottom line is that President Obama and his administration continue to find ways to develop the nanny state. If they have found a way to invade the lunch tray of the youngest members of our society, what's next? The new regulations are a one-size-fits-all encroachment of our liberties. The president's technique of using class warfare is now also seen in the lunch line today. If children can afford to buy more a la carte items, they may do so to supplement their lunches. This leaves those children whose families cannot afford to supplement the bare minimum even hungrier. For many children, lunch is the only complete meal they will have each day, and this provides even greater concern for the smaller portions.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

No Hungry Kids Act helps students

Rep. Steve King 2015 (Congressman from Iowa; serves on the Agriculture Committee.) “King Re-Introduces No Hungry Kids Act” Mar 20, 2015 <https://steveking.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/king-re-introduces-no-hungry-kids-act-0>

“I have re-introduced the ‘No Hungry Kids Act’ to help our students be the best they can be. The USDA has set a calorie limit on school lunches. The goal of the school lunch program was – and is – to ensure students receive enough nutrition to be healthy and to learn. The misguided nanny state, as advanced by Michelle Obama's ‘Healthy and Hunger Free Kids Act,’ was interpreted by Secretary Vilsack to be a directive that, because some kids are overweight, he would put every child on a diet. Parents know that their kids deserve all of the healthy and nutritious food they want. My 'No Hungry Kids Act' prohibits the USDA from rationing calories to our children, so schools can serve our students as much nutritious food as they want, so that our students can grow and learn and excel, in school and out of school – in the classroom and on the playing field.”

School Nutrition Association agrees – HHFKA requirements need to be reformed

Teresa Watanabe, 2014 (Watanabe reports for the Los Angeles Times, a paid daily newspaper published in Los Angeles, California, since 1881.) “Solutions sought to reduce food waste at schools” April 1, 2014 <http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-lausd-waste-20140402-story.html>

The widespread concerns have prompted the School Nutrition Assn., representing 55,000 school food providers, to launch lobbying efforts to revise the child nutrition law, which is up for reauthorization next year. Among other things, the group wants to remove the requirement forcing students to take a fruit or vegetable, suspend rules requiring lower sodium and drop a planned shift from half to full whole grain in food products beginning in July. "We're not opposed to healthy changes," said Julia Bauscher, the group's president-elect. "We just want changes that don't unnecessarily increase cost and force students to take foods they have no intention of eating."

NSBA calls for relief from school meal regulations

The National School Boards Association (NSBA), 2014 (The leading advocate for public education and supports equity and excellence in public education through school board leadership. NSBA represents state school boards associations and their more than 90,000 local school board members throughout the U.S.) “NSBA Urges House to Give School Districts Flexibility on Nutrition Programs” May 19, 2014 <https://www.nsba.org/newsroom/press-releases/nsba-urges-house-give-school-districts-flexibility-nutrition-programs>

The National School Boards Association (NSBA) is calling for flexibility and relief from onerous regulations in federal school meal programs as the U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee responsible for funding the Department of Agriculture considers FY 2015 appropriations.

Need to stop forcing students to take food they don’t want, and then throw it out

Kimberly Leonard, 2015(Kimberly Leonard is a health care reporter for the News division at U.S. News. Previously she worked in Health Rankings as a multimedia producer and reporter.) “Advocates, States Take a Bite Out of School Nutrition Law” March 13, 2015 <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/03/13/advocates-states-take-a-bite-out-of-school-nutrition-law> [Brackets in original]

Laura Metzger, director of food and nutrition services for Westonka Public Schools in Minnetrista, Minnesota, says the department works hard to provide fresh fruits and vegetables that are appealing to students – fresh apples, crisp oranges and lots of colorful produce. She says the law has improved school lunches, but she doesn't think students should be forced to take items they don't want. "If they don’t want [a piece of fruit] for the day, then we need to improve our nutrition education and tell them why they should have it," she says. "We should not force them to have it on their tray and then throw it out."

Many US Schools Agree: You can tell because they’re dropping out of the school lunch program since HHFKA

B. Christopher Agee, 2014 (Reporter for Western Journalism Center, founded in 1991 by Joseph Farah and James H. Smith. Based in Sacramento, California, the center produces a popular conservative newsletter.) “$4 Million In Food Thrown Away Every Day Under Michelle’s School Lunch Program” September 23, 2014 <http://www.westernjournalism.com/4-million-food-thrown-away-every-day-michelles-school-lunch-program/>

Of course, this is far from the first report regarding the law’s icy reception by students and administrators. As it stands, hundreds of districts have severed ties with the program despite the fact that doing so results in a precipitous drop in federal funding. Other districts are trying to find new ways to give kids meals they will find palatable. Amy Merda, food service director for Canton Local Schools in Ohio, touted the addition of a former chef to her staff. The result has produced lunches students are more likely to eat; however, the ever-unpopular vegetable and fruit portions of the meals are still generally left uneaten. WCPO cited several school officials who defended their decision to drop out of the program based on the fact that it is wasteful and kids are leaving the lunchroom hungry. “I have to think that across the country it has to be a staggering amount of food going to waste,” reasoned Gene Kirchner, superintendent of Kentucky’s Fort Thomas School District, “and I think there are people out there who could really use that food.”

Schools pulling out because of HHFKA

Courtney Coren, 2013 (Reporter for Newsmax Media, commonly called Newsmax, is a conservative[1] American news media organization founded by Christopher Ruddy and based in West Palm Beach, Florida. It operates the news website Newsmax.com, publishes the Franklin Prosperity Report and Newsmax magazine, and runs a conservative cable news channel Newsmax TV ) “Schools Quit Michelle Obama's Lunch Program As They Lose Money” 29 Aug 2013 <http://www.newsmax.com/US/obama-healthy-lunch-program/2013/08/29/id/522944/>

Schools across the country are pulling out of Michelle Obama's healthy lunch program due to students' lack of interest. The $11 billion National School Lunch Program was implemented as part of the "Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010," a law pushed by the First Lady as part of her signature campaign to fight childhood obesity.

DISAVANTAGE RESPONSES

A/T “Unhealthy meals” - Requiring fruit and vegetables does not equal increased F&V consumption

Ashley Welch 2015 (journalist for CBSNews.com) “School lunch fruits and veggies often tossed in trash, study finds” 25 Aug 2015 <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/school-lunch-fruits-and-veggies-often-tossed-in-trash-study-finds/>

"We saw this as a great opportunity to access the policy change and ask a really important question, which was, 'Does requiring a child to select a fruit or vegetable under the updated national school lunch program guidelines that came into effect in 2012 correspond with increased fruit and vegetable consumption?'" lead study author Sarah Amin told CBS News. "The answer was clearly no."

A/T “HHFKA Reduces Obesity” - Decline in obesity not guaranteed; turn, it may make obesity worse

Craig Gundersen 2014 (Univ of Illinois professor in the Dept of Agricultural and Consumer Economics and executive director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory.) “The Potentially Negative Consequences Associated with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act” August 12, 2014 <http://policymatters.illinois.edu/the-potentially-negative-consequences-associated-with-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act/> (brackets added)

There are some in the United States who may be willing to accept more hunger among children if this were paired with a decline in childhood obesity. However, a decline in obesity may not occur due to these “healthier meals” for two main reasons. First, there is evidence that persons will compensate for the loss of calories in one meal with additional calories in other meals. So, for children in households with sufficient resources, the reduction in calories in school meals may be replaced with calories in other meals. Second, as noted above, many schools have reported declines in participation in the NSLP [National School Lunch Program]. If these children are being given even healthier meals through sack lunches or through consumption of foods at local retail food outlets, this may then mean these children would not be at higher risk of obesity. But, if their sack lunches or alternative outside-school meal options are not healthier, they could be at higher risk of obesity.

A/T “HHFKA Reduces Obesity” - School meals not cause of obesity

Susan Joy Clark, 2012 (Clark is a reporter for NewJersey.com. NewJersey.com is a digital news content provider and website in New Jersey. According to a report in the New York Times in 2012, it is the largest provider of digital news in the state. NJ.com provides content for numerous publications NJ.com's news reports are widely quoted by other news publications such as the New York Daily News, the Chicago Tribune, the Washington Post, and other news organizations around the nation.) “Does the Hunger-Free Kids Act actually do what it purports to do?” October 4, 2012 <http://www.northjersey.com/opinion/does-the-hunger-free-kids-act-actually-do-what-it-purports-to-do-1.504862>

These new regulations are part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, signed by President Obama in December 2010, with the new guidelines taking effect this school year. FYI to the federal government, children are not obese because they eat school lunches. Many children are obese because they don’t get enough exercise. They don’t walk to or from school, they don’t eat healthy meals at home and they do lots of sitting in front of the computer and the television.

A/T “Health Benefits Lost” – Health benefits not realized in Status Quo

Craig Gundersen, 2014 (Univ of Illinois professor in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics and executive director of the National Soybean Research Laboratory.) “The Potentially Negative Consequences Associated with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act” August 12, 2014 <http://policymatters.illinois.edu/the-potentially-negative-consequences-associated-with-the-healthy-hunger-free-kids-act/>

Second, children may be less likely to eat what is served through the revised guidelines and, hence, a decline in the receipt of school meals. This is consistent with a study that showed a marked decline in milk consumption after flavored milk was removed from some school meal programs due to the perceived negative characteristics of flavored milk and, as a consequence, the health benefits associated with milk consumption were not realized. Something similar is likely to occur when “healthier meals” are introduced.

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