

**PAT ROBERTS, KANSAS**  
CHAIRMAN

THAD COCHRAN, MISSISSIPPI  
MITCH MCCONNELL, KENTUCKY  
JOHN BOOZMAN, ARKANSAS  
JOHN HOEVEN, NORTH DAKOTA  
JONI ERNST, IOWA  
CHARLES E. GRASSLEY, IOWA  
JEFF SESSIONS, ALABAMA  
JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA  
STEVE DAINES, MONTANA  
DAVID PERDUE, GEORGIA

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6000

202-224-2035

**DEBBIE STABENOW, MICHIGAN**  
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER

PATRICK J. LEAHY, VERMONT  
SHERROD BROWN, OHIO  
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA  
MICHAEL F. BENNET, COLORADO  
KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND, NEW YORK  
JOE DONNELLY, INDIANA  
HEIDI HEITKAMP, NORTH DAKOTA  
ROBERT P. CASEY, JR., PENNSYLVANIA  
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND

April 6, 2017

Acting Deputy Secretary Michael Young  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Acting Deputy Secretary Young:

For the past several years, I have heard concerns from school children, parents, teachers, administrators, and school foodservice providers in Kansas and across the country regarding the challenges of complying with rigid school food standards.

The rules "Standards: Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs" (published January 26, 2012) and "National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010" (published July 29, 2016) have limited the flexibility of school foodservice providers, led to declining participation in the program, increased food waste in school cafeterias, and caused confusion regarding what foods can be used in fundraisers and extracurricular activities.

In response to our constituents, Congress provided varying degrees of flexibility relating to these regulations since they were issued. In addition, I included regulatory flexibility for schools in a bill that the Senate Agriculture Committee unanimously reported out last year. However, the current waiver system does not provide schools and those involved in planning and preparing school meals with the necessary flexibility and certainty. I urge you to act administratively and provide immediate relief from certain egregious aspects of the standards, particularly in regards to the rapidly approaching sodium limits and the dairy and whole grain requirements. After providing immediate relief, I urge you to provide long-term flexibility and certainty for our schools, our school foodservice directors, and other stakeholders.

If your staff has questions regarding this letter, please have them contact Julian Baer on the staff of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry at (202) 224-2035. Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and I look forward to working with you.

With every best wish.

Sincerely,

  
Pat Roberts  
Chairman