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Campaign to End Obesity Hails Passage of Child Nutrition Reauthorization in Committee & Urges Swift Floor Action

(Washington DC) Today, the Campaign to End Obesity praised the members of the House Committee on Education and Labor for passing Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation out of Committee. The move comes on the heels of a full mobilization effort by the Campaign to meet with leaders on the Hill and convey the urgent need to help curb the obesity epidemic by improving the nutritional quality of all food provided on school campuses year-round, including foods sold outside of the cafeteria.

“If we are to turn the tide on an epidemic that threatens to make this generation the first to live shorter lives than their parents, we have a fundamental need for tools like the Child Nutrition Reauthorization,” said Penny Lee, Executive Director of the Campaign to End Obesity. “Today, the House showed decisive leadership by passing this bill out of Committee. We urge Members to continue moving it to the floor for a vote, before federal nutrition programs expire on September 30, 2010. With nearly one in three of America’s children overweight or obese, and 32 million children relying on such programs, there is no time to hesitate.”

The “Improving Nutrition for America’s Children Act” (H.R. 5504) represents vital steps to make certain that all Americans have access to healthy, affordable and nutritious foods so that we may begin to reverse America’s obesity epidemic. The bill would expand access of nutritious foods to children, as well as women and the elderly, particularly in communities of need.

While enrolled in school, children whose families receive federal assistance would be directly certified for free school meals, eliminating paper applications. This provision would also allow states to use Medicaid and SCHIP data to expand the direct certification process. Outside of school hours, the bill would provide meals for over 225,000 children in community-based summer programs, after-school programs and low income rural areas. It also improves access for children in home-based child care by reducing administrative costs for sponsors of child care meal programs.

Currently, two-thirds of adults and nearly one in three children struggle with overweight and obesity. Obesity is evidenced as triggering more than 60 chronic and often life-threatening diseases —including heart disease, diabetes osteoarthritis, stroke and even cancer. Additionally, obesity accounts for one of the greatest single expenses to our health care system, triggering \$147 billion in health care costs each year, with half paid by Medicare and Medicaid.

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About the Campaign

The Campaign to End Obesity is dedicated to reversing America's costliest disease. Ending this epidemic requires change – in individuals, institutions and communities. The Campaign convenes leaders from industry, academia, public health and associations to speak with one voice for federal policies to reverse the obesity epidemic and promote healthy weight in children and adults.