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## **National School Lunch Week: Congress Should Give 31 Million Children Access to Healthier Foods**

During National School Lunch Week, the Campaign to End Obesity is highlighting meaningful changes Congress should make to federal food programs to ensure America's children lead healthier lives. One child in five struggles with obesity and almost 31 million children participate in the National School Lunch Program, and yet the nutritional standards for these lunches have not been updated since 1995. Our schools have the opportunity to set the standards for quality nutritional food for our nation's children and begin to reverse the rate of obesity in this country. Now is the time for Congress to update school lunch nutritional guidelines and greatly improve the access to healthier foods for millions of children.

In addition to the school lunch program, a number of federal food programs could be strengthened in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act, which expired in September. The Campaign urges Congress to use this opportunity to increase access to healthy, affordable and nutritious foods for the millions of Americans who participate in the federal food programs. Congress should also ensure that the foods sold on school grounds meet up-to-date nutritional guidelines from the Institute of Medicine. Legislation should also encourage the use of BMI (body mass index) screening for children in schools. BMI is a simple vital sign that adults can use to guide children in maintaining a healthy weight. Congress has a powerful opportunity to implement a BMI pilot program in conjunction with increasing school lunch program reimbursement rates, as part of the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act.

Across the nation, 1 in 3 adults and 1 in 5 children struggle with obesity. Given obesity's extraordinary social and economic costs, Congress must use every tool to address this epidemic. The Campaign's Director of Government Relations, Chris Fox, can provide further resources to Congressional staff. He may be reached at [chris@obesitycampaign.org](mailto:chris@obesitycampaign.org) or 202-466-8100.

### **About the Campaign to End Obesity**

The Campaign to End Obesity is dedicated to reversing America's costliest medical condition. Right now, 1 in 3 adults and 1 in 5 children struggle with obesity. This year, taxpayers, governments and businesses will spend as much as \$147 billion on health costs linked to obesity. Ending this epidemic requires change -- in individuals and in institutions. The Campaign convenes leaders from industry, academia, public health and associations to advocate with one voice for federal policies that promote healthy weight in children and adults.

For more information about the Campaign's work, visit [www.obesitycampaign.org](http://www.obesitycampaign.org) or call 202-466-8100.

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