

January 29, 2009

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee:

I write to indicate my strong support for Senate Bill 46. To me, as a pediatrician with expertise in Nutrition & Obesity policy (& a mother!), there is no justification for selling highly processed, high sugar, high saturated fat snacks in our schools.

While the income generated from such sales is seductive, and becomes progressively more so, our schools' first question should not be "How can we make supplemental money?" but rather "Does a given policy potentially help/hurt/or is neutral with respect to children's health?" While it is not the job of schools to provide "clinical care," neither should they undermine general health messages or the efforts made by parents to promote good dietary practices. For those who feel this is "the nanny state", I ask:

- Since when did our schools become an open marketplace in which the shrewdest vendors can sell their wares?
- If there should be no regulation of what is sold in the schools (the free choice argument), then why don't we sell cigarettes in high schools? Surely that would be a good fund raiser, and would the free choice advocates say it's up to the parents to teach their kids not to buy cigarettes? I find that a non-compelling argument.

If it is all about money, let's find other ways to support our schools & our students...not via commercializing our very precious resource, public education.

As we worry about academic performance, let us lead the way by providing the healthiest environment we can.

Thank you for your consideration.

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