

Colorado Senate

Senate Education Committee Thursday, January 25, 2006: 1:30 PM	Stephen Dean Bohrer, Ph.D. Superintendent of Schools Holyoke School District Re-1J Representing the Colorado Rural Schools Caucus
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Dear Members of the Colorado Senate Education Committee:

I come today from Holyoke to express my reservations to SB 46 (health snacks), represent my Board of Education, and lend support to the opinion of the Colorado Rural Schools Caucus that if passed, would be intrusive and duplicative.

In a state that constitutionally mandates the concept of local control in education, it is troubling for the Legislature to prescribe what schools can and cannot sell for snack foods. Like the soda pop bill that was passed last session, this bill will interfere with the ability of local districts to decide for themselves what is best for their students.

It is duplicative because we already follow federal mandates that dictate snack and soda vending machine contents and hours of operation. The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines the contents of the meals we serve to assure a nutritional balance of calories, sugars, and fat. Our districts' policies cover classroom snacks and after school fundraisers as well. In addition, Colorado statute 22-32-136, mandates each school district to establish policies that assures every student has access to healthful food choices.

Schools are easy targets for this sort of feel good legislation, but schools are not the culprits. We already provide the solution, as schools offer many wholesome and vigorous activities that benefit students and that burn off tremendous numbers of calories; making those in a Snicker bar of no significance.

If you really want to make an impact on obesity, use your power to forbid soda and snack sales at super markets, convenience stores, and fast food restaurants or establish minimal ages for indulging these supposedly dangerous items. As a symbolic step, and example of health consciousness, order the removal of the vending machines from the basement of this Capitol!

The health of our students is not something we take lightly. We offer classes in physical education, exercise, weight-lifting, health, and wellness and encourage every secondary student to participate in a robust sports program. We strongly believe our local boards of education are in the best position to address properly the needs of our students.

In this troubled time, there are many important issues for you to consider. I cannot imagine that this should be one of them.