

A leader of and advocate for the university in countless ways, Erickson leaves behind a legacy of excellence, integrity, pride, and tireless dedication for this community to cherish and build upon for generations to come.

As a proud Penn State alumnus, I want to thank President Rodney Erickson for his commitment and his dedication to Penn State University. I also wish you and your wife, Shari, the very best with future plans for the years ahead.

YOUTH TRAFFIC SAFETY MONTH

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as well, to recognize Youth Traffic Safety Month, which is celebrated each May.

As many are aware, motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of death for teens. In fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, teenagers are involved in three times as many fatal crashes as all other drivers.

An even more disturbing fact is that one-third of fatal teen crashes involve a young driver who had been drinking. Also troubling is that 50 percent of high school students say they text "at least sometimes" while driving.

Now, these statistics are a stark reminder of how much more must be done to educate our kids on the privileges and responsibilities of operating a motor vehicle.

Mr. Speaker, as we begin the summer season, which is a dangerous time of year on the road for all drivers, let us reflect on these tragic statistics.

While Youth Traffic Safety Month is coming to a conclusion, let us recommit in the coming months, through advocacy, education, and awareness, to promote road safety and reduce the number of vehicle-related fatalities.

NUTRITIOUS SCHOOL MEALS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MCGOVERN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MCGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, providing access to healthy school meals shouldn't be controversial. We all want what is best for our kids because nothing is more important than our children. Yet, for decades, we have seen school food products—both prepared meals and packaged snacks—fail to be as healthy and nutritious as possible. Combined with other factors, we are seeing childhood obesity rates increase over that time. Not surprisingly, we have seen other health problems associated with obesity also increase.

But that began to change because of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, also known as the child nutrition reauthorization bill, which reauthorizes our school meal programs as well as the WIC program. The 2010 bill was especially important because it implemented new health and nutrition standards for schools, including issues like sodium, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Today, the House Appro-

priations Committee will vote on waiving not just these standards, but also basic, reasonable limits on calories, fat, and trans fats.

Now, I was critical of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act not because of the change in nutritional guidelines for school meals, but because the bill cuts SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, in order to pay for these improvements. Sadly, we took food away from hungry people in order to improve the nutritional quality of school meals and improve school meal reimbursements. It was one of the more difficult votes I have taken as a Member of this House, and I am still angry that we robbed Peter to pay Paul instead of using better offsets that were available at the time.

Now, that being said, I strongly support the policies in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. And that is why I am dismayed at the attacks coming from the Republicans in Congress. House and Senate Republicans are trying to roll back many of the guidelines in this important legislation.

Now, I am aware of their concerns. Some food service providers, including in my own State, tell me that these new standards cost too much, that they lead to increased food waste, that healthier products that meet these standards aren't available, and that kids just don't eat these new foods. We should work with local providers to overcome many of those challenges.

But it is important to recognize that USDA has empirical data that shows the law is actually working. Not only that, the Government Accountability Office, or GAO, confirms that the law is working as intended and that participation will get better as kids get accustomed to healthier foods.

Harvard recently documented significant increases in children's consumption of fruits and vegetables because of the Federal school food standards. That is a good thing. Data also shows that the new school meal nutrition standards do not cause schools to lose money after they are initially established.

Most importantly, USDA has the authority to work with schools, school districts, and States to address the issues that may affect participation rates. In other words, schools, school districts, and States can ask USDA for assistance in implementing these new standards at local levels, especially when kids may not be participating locally in ways that USDA either intends or sees in other areas of the country. States and localities should take advantage of this flexibility before seeking permanent changes to the law.

These school meal standards, along with the WIC food package, are science-based. That means that politics was left out of the decision-making process and left up to expert nutritionists. The reason why white potatoes, for example, were left out of the WIC program was because the experts at the Institute of Medicine said that they do

not provide the necessary nutritional impact as other foods eligible for the WIC program do. That is another way of saying that white potatoes aren't healthy enough for pregnant mothers and young children.

Yet now the Republicans are trying to scrap these important nutrition standards. And they are doing so under the false pretense that it is what is best for the kids.

Mr. Speaker, look at the facts: House Republicans are supposedly acting on behalf of our kids while they tried to cut \$40 billion from SNAP, while they tried to cut hundreds of millions of dollars from WIC, and while they continually ignore nutritional science by changing food packages to benefit specific industries.

The truth is their position will do real harm to our Nation's kids. We can do better. We can and should work with USDA to implement this law in a smart way and not bow down to junk food special interests. We shouldn't play politics with our kids' health just because some people don't like this administration. My Republican friends should get over it.

There is a time and place for politics. But lunch is not that time, and the school cafeteria is not that place. The health of our kids should come first.

Mr. Speaker, I insert into the RECORD two letters expressing opposition to the rollback of these important nutritional standards. One is from 19 former presidents of the School Nutrition Association, and the other is from Mission Readiness, a group of retired military leaders who believe childhood obesity is a national security issue.

SCHOOL NUTRITION ASSOCIATION,
PAST PRESIDENTS INITIATIVE,
May 27, 2014.

*The Honorable (Senate and House Members of
Committees on Agriculture Appropriations):*

DEAR AGRICULTURE APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE COMMITTEE: Thank you for passing the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 that is helping school nutrition programs be part of a strong response to the nation's obesity epidemic. Most schools are having success implementing the HHFKA. However some schools report difficulty meeting the requirements and are requesting waivers.

We the undersigned past presidents of the School Nutrition Association, understand that major change takes time and a commitment to the goal that prompted the change. We believe most communities and schools want school nutrition programs that help children learn to enjoy healthy foods. We are confident that the broad public support for HHFKA and USDA's demonstrated willingness to work with school leaders to solve implementation issues will prevail and create stronger school nutrition programs.

We urge you to reject calls for waivers, maintain strong standards in all schools, and direct USDA to continue working with school leaders and state directors to find ways, including technical assistance, that will ensure all schools can meet the HHFKA standards. Specific concerns regarding whole grains and sodium can be addressed as technical corrections. We must not reverse the progress that was sought by school leaders and is well on its way to success in most schools. Should you need additional information please contact Jane Wynn or Shirley Watkins.

Sincerely,

Shirley Watkins, former USDA Under Secretary FNCS; Katie Wilson, PhD, Executive Director National Food Service Management Institute; Josephine Martin, PhD, former Executive Director National Food Service Management; Institute Dorothy Caldwell, former USDA Deputy Administrator of FNS; Mary Nix former Cobb County, GA School Nutrition Director; Jane Wynn, former Broward County, FL School Nutrition Director; Anne Gennings, former New Hartford, NY School Nutrition Director; Mary Hill, Director of School Nutrition, Jackson, MS; Dora Rivas, Executive Director Food & Child Nutrition Services Dallas ISD, TX; Helen Phillips, Senior Director School Nutrition Norfolk, VA; Elizabeth McPherson, Former Food Service Director Caswell, NC; Phyllis Griffith, Former Child Nutrition Services Director Columbus, OH; Nancy Rice, State Director GA Child Nutrition Programs; Gene White, President Global Child Nutrition Foundation; Marcia Smith, PhD, former Food Service Director, Polk County, FL; Gaye Lynn MacDonald, Consultant & Former Food Service Director Bellingham, WA; Penny McConnell, Director of Food Service Fairfax County, VA; Beverly Lowe, Consultant, Former Food Service Director Hampton, VA; Thelma Becker, Retired Former Food Service Director PA.

MISSION: READINESS,
MILITARY LEADERS FOR KIDS,
Washington, DC, May 28, 2014.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: On behalf of the nearly 450 retired admirals and generals of Mission: Readiness, I write in support of efforts designed to improve the nutritional quality of foods served in schools. As you consider the FY 2015 Agriculture Appropriations bill, we respectfully urge you to:

Support the implementation of heightened school meal standards and refrain from any weakening or delay of science-based guidelines; and

Support the \$25 million included for School Meal Equipment Grants.

Mission: Readiness is the national security organization of retired admirals and generals who have mobilized in response to Department of Defense data indicating that 75 percent of all young Americans between the ages of 17 and 24 are unable to join the military because they are medically or physically unfit, are too poorly educated, or have disqualifying criminal records. A shrinking pool of eligible Americans is a threat to our national security.

Overweight and obesity are of particular concern to the military. Excess body fat has become the leading medical disqualifier for military service. Today, more than one in five Americans between the ages of 17 and 24 are too heavy to enlist. As a result, hundreds of potential recruits fail the physical entrance exam every month because they are too overweight. In fact, between 2006 and 2011, the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command reported that over 62,000 individuals were turned away because of their weight.

Failure to meet weight-height requirements is not just a problem among potential recruits. The data show that excess weight impacts those who have already enlisted as well. Every year, the military discharges over 1,200 first-term enlistees before their contracts are up due to weight problems; the military must then recruit and train their replacements at a cost of \$75,000 per person, totaling roughly \$90 million annually. This

pales in comparison to the estimated \$1.1 billion per year that the Department of Defense spends on medical care associated with excess fat and obesity through TRICARE.

American youth spend more time in school than anywhere else outside of their homes. Children consume up to half of their daily calories during school hours, and the childhood years lay the foundation for lifelong eating habits—for better or for worse. As such, the food they receive at school plays a critical role in supporting their long-term health.

Thanks to newly updated U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition standards, requirements for school meals have been updated to align with current nutrition science. Schools are now serving more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or no-fat dairy options while offering fewer empty calories and high-fat options.

EVIDENCE-BASED NUTRITION STANDARDS

Overall, schools across the country have done a commendable job in moving forward with the implementation of updated school meal standards. Implementation is never an easy process, and there have certainly been challenges, but by and large, schools are on the right track. Recent data shows that more than 90 percent of schools are currently in compliance with science-based standards. Reports also indicate that fruit and vegetable consumption have increased. Schools are capable of serving healthier foods and the vast majority are already doing so. We are at an important juncture. Rather than retreating from science-based standards, we need to continue to advance.

In addition to the progress made on school meals, we are also pleased with updated snack food standards, which closely adhere to recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine. Schools have made great headway in serving healthier food, but to finish the job it is critically important that we move forward in addressing the other half of the school food environment—foods sold in vending machines, snack bars and a la carte lines. Because healthier schools meals are compromised by the over 400 billion calories from junk food being sold in schools each year, revised standards for competitive foods are essential supporting good nutrition habits. Moreover, data shows that improving snack food standards can actually help increase revenues by driving up participation in the school lunch and breakfast programs.

Given the national security implications of child obesity, we respectfully urge members of the Committee to refrain from pursuing any Congressional action that would weaken or delay the implementation of science-based school nutrition standards. Instead, Congress should defer to USDA to provide any needed flexibility for schools, such as the recently announced flexibility for whole grain pasta.

SCHOOL CAFETERIA EQUIPMENT ASSISTANCE

Many school kitchens are struggling against outdated facilities to efficiently prepare healthy meals for their students. Although more than 90 percent of schools across the nation are successfully meeting science-based standards, many report that they are forced to make-do with costly and inefficient workarounds. Designed primarily to reheat and hold food, many kitchens need new equipment capable of preparing healthier options. As such, we strongly support additional resources for School Meal Equipment Grants. We were pleased to see \$25 million included for these grants in the subcommittee's mark and urge continued support for this important funding stream.

Thank you for your attention to these important issues. Together, we can make sure

that America's child obesity crisis does not become a national security crisis.

Very respectfully,

MIRIAM ROLLIN,
Acting National Director.

□ 1030

LET'S ACKNOWLEDGE OBAMACARE DOESN'T WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Speaker, recently, some politicians in Washington and even back in my home State of Kentucky have held out Kentucky's online exchange, or Kentucky Kynect, as a model for how the Affordable Care Act, or ObamaCare, can be implemented successfully. They argue that ObamaCare is working in Kentucky.

While it is true that, unlike the billion dollar malfunctioning healthcare.gov Web site, the Kentucky Kynect Web site has appeared to function properly, but that is about all that works well.

ObamaCare is making life harder for most Kentucky families and small businesses, driving up premiums and deductibles, taking away choices of doctors and hospitals, and forcing people to lose the insurance coverage that they liked. The President promised that: if you like your health care plan, you will get to keep it.

But 280,000 of my fellow Kentuckians have lost the health insurance that they had, the health insurance that they liked. The government is taking away choices. Patients, families, and doctors should be in control of their health care, but ObamaCare takes choices away from people.

One insurance broker in Kentucky told me that insurance on the Kentucky Kynect exchange, the replacement for all of those canceled policies, excludes 90 out of 130 hospitals in Kentucky from its network.

Then there is the cost. Premiums and deductibles are skyrocketing. When people are able to get the Web site to work, they are discovering that insurance is not affordable.

As a candidate for President, then-Senator Barack Obama promised to sign a health care law that would cut the cost of a typical family's premium by up to \$2,500 a year, but a quietly released report from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services projects that 11 million Americans will face higher premiums because of ObamaCare.

ObamaCare is an especially bad deal for our seniors. A recent report studying the impact of the law's cuts to Medicare Advantage plans concluded that premiums could increase for some Kentucky seniors up to \$1,700 per year.

Every day, I hear stories from Kentucky families and small businesses about how they have been hurt by ObamaCare, about how the government is making life harder for them.

Consider Tony Calvert, a truck driver and member of the Teamsters union