

House Panel Advances Bill on School Lunch Options

By [RON NIXON](#) - MAY 29, 2014



A salad bar in a public school cafeteria in New York in 2011. About 32 million children participate in school meal programs each day. Credit Chang Lee/The New York Times

WASHINGTON — The House Appropriations Committee on Thursday passed an agriculture budget bill that included nearly \$21 billion for child nutrition that would allow schools to opt out of White House nutritional guidelines passed in 2012. The vote was 31 to 18.

The Obama administration, hoping to combat rising childhood obesity, announced new rules in 2012 that added more fruits and green vegetables to school breakfasts and lunches; the rules also reduced the amount of salt and fat children consume at schools.

About 32 million children participate in school meal programs each day.

Representative Robert B. Aderholt, Republican of Alabama and chairman of the House appropriations agriculture subcommittee, said Thursday that the provision would give schools 12 months to help them comply with the rules.

“Everyone supports healthy meals for children,” Mr. Aderholt said. “But the bottom line is that schools are finding it’s too much, too quick.”

But Representative Sam Farr of California, the ranking Democrat on the subcommittee, called the waiver a poison pill that would undermine congressional efforts to provide children with nutritious foods.

Mr. Farr sponsored an amendment that would have removed the waiver from the budget bill, but it was defeated 29 to 22 after nearly two hours of debate.

“This waiver gives schools an out, saying you don’t have to do healthy school meals if it’s hard,” Mr. Farr said.

The House will most likely take up the bill in the next few weeks.

Under the legislation passed on Thursday, the Agriculture Department must establish a waiver process for local school districts that have found it too expensive to comply with those tougher nutrition standards.

The [School Nutrition Association](#), a group composed of school nutritionists, praised the legislation. The group, which receives financing from several food companies that originally opposed the nutrition standards, said the cost of the new rules had led to a decrease in the number of schools participating in the federal meals programs. The group said the rules had also led to tons of wasted food because children were not eating the healthier alternatives.

“We are all working to encourage students to make nutritious choices, but in many school cafeterias, these regulations are hindering those efforts,” said Leah Schmidt, president of the association. “School meal programs need more flexibility to plan healthy menus that appeal to students.”

The Obama administration and many nutritionists say the legislation would roll back efforts to reduce the number of obese children, who are at risk of developing high cholesterol or high blood pressure.

The rules were a major component of Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move!” campaign to reduce the number of overweight children through exercise and better nutrition. Mrs. Obama wrote an [Op-Ed article](#) in The New York Times on Thursday about “attempts in Congress to undo so much of what we’ve accomplished on behalf of our children.”

Tom Vilsack, the agriculture secretary, said in a conference call with reporters on Wednesday that the administration has added additional money in the form of grants to schools to help them purchase healthier foods. He said that claims that the nutrition rules had led to a decline in schools participating in lunch and breakfast programs were misleading, and that the rules had no effect on food waste, which had been an issue since 2007, before the nutrition standards were in place.

Margo G. Wootan, director of nutrition policy at the Washington-based [Center for Science in the Public Interest](#), said the legislation was an attempt to gut school food standards.

“Just because math and science programs in schools are hard,” she said, “you don’t throw out the courses.”

The rules are the first changes in 15 years to the \$11 billion school lunch program.

Reader Comments

Jim

Colorado [3 days ago](#)

Schools should be forced to comply with this and there should be federal inspectors in the field to make sure it works. All children in school in the U.S. should get healthy food with less fat and sugar than what they've been serving. If you don't start changing the food supply's quality with the children right in the schools, this will continue with the entrenched system that is now failing the nation.

- 59Recommend

HRaven

NJ [3 days ago](#)

Federal inspectors in the field? Doesn't work with Republican legislators who want to shrink the government.

- 1Recommend

Charles W.

NJ [3 days ago](#)

Federal inspectors in the field just mean more useless, parasitic, self-serving bureaucrats on the federal payroll.

- 2Recommend

Cleo

New Jersey [3 days ago](#)

Federal inspectors should be patrolling all of the Red States for all activities. If there are not enough Federal inspectors, the Blue States can supply extra. Also, the Red States must pay for all of the inspectors. Remember, it is for their own good.

- 3Recommend

Chip Steiner

Lenoir, NC [3 days ago](#)

In other words, Charles W., cut the food program completely since unfettered capitalism, in all its glorious generosity and compassion, will use the tax dollars saved to ensure our children eat their fruit and vegetables. Of course not! What kids eat is up to their parents! You can just pocket the chump change it takes to fund this program. Enjoy your jellyroll.

- Recommend

NYT Pick

Bob

Ohio [3 days ago](#)

Name a significant improvement that was easy? The problem of bad nutrition for children is well documented as are the exorbitant downstream costs (i.e. diabetes, hypertension, strokes, heart attacks, etc.).

Why can't we set out to do the right thing and stick to it? I do not understand the Republican desire to make things easy at the cost of harming children and running up future costs. Many of the school districts who are complaining, simply don't want to try hard. If most districts can do this, it can be done...let's just do it.

- 307Recommend

RLR

Florida [3 days ago](#)

The Republicans' rolling back this program obviously has much to do with undermining any program championed by anyone named "Obama." They do not appear to have any concern about whether their actions will harm children.

- 8Recommend

PogoWasRight

Melbourne Florida [3 days ago](#)

One of the obvious problems is that nobody ever asks the children what they consider bad nutrition. I remember long ago when I would always choose a "Twinkie" one a stalk of lettuce. (sigh)

- Recommend

CS

Richmond, VA [3 days ago](#)

You are right Bob, the downstream effects of bad nutrition are very well documented, so many obesity-related health problems could be easily avoided. May be some of the Republicans are not sufficiently educated about this.....or may be they are more interested in keeping the health insurance companies busy and rich.....very sad.....

- 3Recommend

Lisa Nelson

Salt Lake City [3 days ago](#)

I wholeheartedly agree your comment. How can we expect kids who have been offered pizza, cheeseburgers, sugar-milk, etc., to immediately embrace these changes. Of course junk tastes better....unless the schools learn to cook fresh food in a tasty manner. Which is where being the adults comes into play. Sadly many cafeterias lost the knowledge of how to cook fresh meals as they've simply been re-heating frozen corporate garbage for so long.

Could that be part of the issue? That the law minimize purchase of all the big Agra processed food? How much of this is simply lost profits to big Agra? Which lobbyist prompted this bill? I certainly doubt it was the "students who hate healthy food lobby".

- 1Recommend

Michelle

Oregon [3 days ago](#)

Interesting that Alabama is one of the very worse States in terms of obesity. And of course the Republican chairman pushing the change from healthy foods is from...Alabama!

- 3Recommend

Cowboy Marine

Colorado Trails [3 days ago](#)

I bet these schools have plenty of dough to hire an extra football coach or two.

- 3Recommend

JFM

Hartford, CT [3 days ago](#)

It's because our republican friends are too busy pandering rather than making necessary policy choices.

- Recommend



HJBoitel

New York [3 days ago](#)

If congress relaxes the requirements for school lunches, we should start a movement for legislation that cuts all subsidies to congressional dining rooms and food carts. i.e. congressional food services must, at least, charge full cost, including personnel costs.

If we cannot afford to subsidize food for our children, then we certainly cannot afford to subsidize food for our legislators.

- 301Recommended

Mae Overman

Purvis, MS [3 days ago](#)

Wow! I didn't know congressional dining rooms are now subsidized! That is terrible & should not be allowed under any circumstance. I worked in D.C. in the 1970s & we paid full price in all government dining rooms (which is how it should be). Back then thermostats in government buildings & the white house were all set at the same temps (In the winter Roselyn Carter wore a sweater in the white house). Maybe our country's leaders need to curtail their spending & lead by example. What's on the menu in government dining rooms & at the White House?

- 4Recommend

Tango

New York NY [3 days ago](#)

Mae Overman

The dining room have been subsidized since day one.

- 3Recommend

Steve

Western Massachusetts [3 days ago](#)

Love your idea! Even better would be to have the Washington DC public school food service provide all the meals for the Congressional cafeteria!

- 2Recommend



HJBoitel

New York [3 days ago](#)

@Steve

You have outdone me. Of course, I adopt your modification.

- 1Recommend

Garak

Tampa, FL [3 days ago](#)

If the schools need additional funding to meet the standards, take the money out of the farm welfare entitlement budget.

- 147Recommend

Carl Ian Schwartz

Paterson, New Jersey [3 days ago](#)

Yes, but our millionaires/corporate sector needs welfare, which they rechannel to legislators through lobbyists. To the children of ordinary folk, it's what Marie Antoinette said, "Let them eat kaka"--preferably from corporate sources, such as Big Macs at school.

- 24Recommend

charlie

ogden [3 days ago](#)

maybe someone should tell congress that these kids could, one day, join the army, so they need to be healthy.

make it defense spending. That well seems to be bottomless...

- 230Recommend

Jon

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

I can see it now: the Equipping Tomorrow's Army Today Act.

- 24Recommend

Carl Ian Schwartz

Paterson, New Jersey [3 days ago](#)

That's exactly what happened in the 1950s, when the Interstate Highway System was built as defense spending (shades of the expanded Autobahn after 1933) and, more importantly, R&D spending, spending on eradicating childhood and infectious diseases, and improved education (from which I benefitted).

- 21Recommend

David X

new haven ct [3 days ago](#)

The Food-Pharma well is even more bottomless. The lobbying expenditures dwarf defense.

- 1Recommend

Steve

Western Massachusetts [3 days ago](#)

Great idea!

Today's kids will also be the nurses, doctors, accountants, etc that will be taking care of the current members of Congress after they retire (some kids will even be the lawyers that keep some of those retired congressmen out of jail!).

We'd better take good care of those who will be taking good care of us in the near future.

- Recommend

Katy

Vermont [3 days ago](#)

What a great lesson for these kids. If you think it might be too hard, you don't even have to try.

- 157Recommend

Dawn Prevete

Atlanta [3 days ago](#)

I guess we are returning to the "ketchup is a vegetable" menu for school lunches. That was one of Ronald Reagan's most innovative ideas.

Subsidies for big food and big agriculture are, apparently, more important to House Republicans than healthy lunches for kids.

- 16Recommend

Jack

Illinois [3 days ago](#)

We have made a tiny bit of progress on the "ketchup as vegetable" menu item. Big Food has convinced the Agricultural Dept. that the tomato sauce on pizza is a vegetable. So ketchup is not a vegetable..but...tomato sauce is.... a tiny bit of progress....

- 8Recommend

Sue McIntosh

Virginia [3 days ago](#)

Jack, the tomato is a fruit not a vegetable.

- Recommend

Mareln

MA [3 days ago](#)

Ah, just following in their hero's footsteps. Remember when Reagan insisted that ketchup was a vegetable?

- 29Recommend

Fadelff

NY, NY [3 days ago](#)

It defies understanding--these GOP Congress people are literally taking the food out of the mouth of children. Shame, shame, shame.

- 43Recommend

David R

undefined [3 days ago](#)

What's to understand? The GOP is mean, mean, mean. They are against everything but guns, defense spending and white men.

- 5Recommend

Look Ahead

is a trusted commenter WA [3 days ago](#)

School lunch providers from America's Stroke Belt need more time to work out the process for battering and deep frying broccoli without making it smell like burned tires.

Meanwhile, the rest of America embraces a long overdue change toward better nutrition for children, since ketchup was declared a vegetable and pink slime substituted for hamburger.

- 26Recommend

William Davis

Llewellyn Park, NJ [3 days ago](#)

So now Republicans have found an excuse to vote against nutrition for school children. Why would any American ever vote Republican again?

- 66Recommend

DRS

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

You are misinformed. The bill merely gives schools flexibility to come up with their own menus, even if Michelle doesn't approve of them.

- 1Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

DRS - You missed the fact that those menus will be influenced by businesses that make their money selling junk food.

- 12Recommend

Jack

Illinois [3 days ago](#)

No DRS, William Davis is not misinformed. He is just not willing to swallow the same old, same old Repub bait and switch tactic that they say they will do one moderate thing and later come in and "surprise" us all with their extremist agenda.

- 12Recommend

William Davis

Llewellyn Park, NJ [3 days ago](#)

DRS, we all understand the bill gives schools the "flexibility" to serve ketchup as a vegetable. Apparently you think that's ok.

- 7Recommend

RP Smith

Marshfield, Mass. [3 days ago](#)

Whatever the Obama Administration (Michelle included) puts forth, the reactionary republicans will oppose. And that means everything. Remember back when president Obama was first elected, he announced he was going on closed circuit TV to speak to school kids about the importance of education and staying in school. The reaction from his opposition was as if Karl Marx was planning to come back from the dead to read the Communist Manifesto to them. Many parents opted to keep their kids home from school that day. This is what he's up against. Try leading a country like this.

- 193Recommend

NYT Pick

Sam Kelly

Dc [3 days ago](#)

Many kids across the country get a large part of their food from school, some just lunch and for some, breakfast and lunch. The kids who are relying on these programs are the ones that need high nutrition, healthy meals the most and somehow, they are getting the short end of the stick because it's too hard for their school to figure out healthy food. Yes, initially kids might throw away more of their lunch because it doesn't taste as good as the junk they've been eating but once we get rid of their alternatives from the vending machines, they won't have a choice and they will get used to the healthier food. School is where kids can be taught how to live a healthier life. Why is it that part of our government seems to be so against that?

- 227Recommend

David X

new haven ct [3 days ago](#)

Why are they against that? MONEY.

The Food-Pharma complex is all about money.

Without our horrid and ever-worsening campaign contribution laws, would we still be subsidizing tobacco and sugar?

- 1Recommend

islandmommy

Staten Island, NY [3 days ago](#)

It's not just "initially." The food will keep getting chucked and the kids will stay hungry & inattentive until they can get home to eat chips and fast food. Anyone who thinks they can get a majority of children to happily eat fruits and veggies two meals a day is kidding themselves, especially when such foods are a single digit fraction of adult american diets. I'm not saying they should eat french fries and pizza everyday but when feeding kids you need to be realistic. Have you been in school cafeterias lately to see the massive amount of waste? For the record I am a health nut when it comes to food but I also cook for a large number of children every day and I understand there is only so much you can expect from them at the table.

- 2Recommend

MS

CA [3 days ago](#)

Studies show it takes approximately 90 days to change a habit. So for example, to lose one's taste for extra salt and sugar, try doing with less or none extra for 90 days. It's initially hard but after a while, you lose your taste for the extra salt or sugar. I did this years ago and now find most desserts to be too sweet personally. Lunch programs also need to try to do this and in addition get the cooperation/ backing of parents/ others who are with the kids regularly. Parents need to model good eating habits -- in the supermarket, the healthy weight kids usually have healthy weight parents while the obese kids have obese parents. I have seen the juxtaposition of the former buying yogurt with their parents present while the latter buys candy also with a parent present. Finally, in some of the schools I or friends have visited in the past -- maybe these Congressman need to visit the same schools -- kids actually eat salad, fruit, and even vegetarian items of their own volition. Learn from those schools and those kids.

- 2Recommend

Jack

Illinois [3 days ago](#)

It all stands to reason. Good nutrition is based on science. And since the GOP has demonstrated that it follows an anti-intellectual, anti-science, anti-education, anti-fact, ignoramus agenda then how would they be even considered partners in this very important work to make sure our children grow up right.

Just how much more stupid do the GOP want Americans? By this action, very stupid indeed.

- 92Recommend

Carl Ian Schwartz

Paterson, New Jersey [3 days ago](#)

Sadly, there are no longer any meaningful controls on programming for children on commercial channels. These push the most awful crap to be consumed or played with. What's the use of good school lunches when kids are told to crave junk food at home for their afternoon snack and dinner?

- 4Recommend

Vox

[3 days ago](#)

from the party the defends the tobacco industry, promotes the NRA's agenda, and attacks affordable universal healthcare, the FDA, clean air and water regulations...

Yeah, who cares about public health?

- 43Recommend

Kim Jong Un

Pyongyang [3 days ago](#)

Material thrown in the garbage should not be categorized as nutritious food. If children do not eat it, it is neither food nor nutritious.

- 3Recommend

Jeff

NV [3 days ago](#)

I bet kids in Korea wouldn't dare waste food.

- Recommend

JPalkki

South Range [3 days ago](#)

Who is this really for?

Someone who really cares about their child will choose the healthy meals and some reactionary right wingers will opt to give their kids Twinkies because they do not want anyone else to tell them anything.

- 7Recommend

mcg135

Santa Rosa, CA [3 days ago](#)

A lot of food either way is not eaten by children. Many kids are just picky eaters. This is why food is thrown out regardless. It is too bad but that is the way children approach food. It would certainly be regressive to stop the healthy meals programs.

- 6Recommend

Max

Willimantic, CT [3 days ago](#)

The bottom line is that Representative Robert Aderholt, Republican of Alabama and chairman of the House appropriations agriculture subcommittee earns too much, too quick. Instead of falsely claiming he supports

healthy meals for children, he should turn much of what he earns back to the American people. He, a hard-hearted Southerner, is doing America's children, some of whom do not live in the South, insufficient good. He is not earning his pay.

- 13Recommend

Thomas

Baton Rouge [3 days ago](#)

there aren't too many in congress that are...

- Recommend

Brian Calderon

Oh [3 days ago](#)

Though its a good idea, you have to realize that lunch is one meal in the day. Making kids eat healthy at school won't stop them from going home and chowing down on sugar, fatty foods.

- 1Recommend

Bill

Charlottesville, VA [3 days ago](#)

You have to realize that for really poor kids a free school lunch may be the best meal they get all day.

- 27Recommend

MilwaukeeWoman1

Milwaukee [3 days ago](#)

And only meal.

- 3Recommend

RP Smith

Marshfield, Mass. [3 days ago](#)

The School Nutrition Association, a group composed of school nutritionists, praised the legislation.....If these people have licenses in nutrition, I demand that they be taken back.

- 9Recommend

James W

McKinney, TX [3 days ago](#)

It's not just made of school nutritionists...check out their website and the "industry advisory board."

<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Content.aspx?id=9970>

- Recommend

johnpakala

jersey city, nj [3 days ago](#)

a prediction:

more than 75% of the schools that find the guidelines too expensive will be in the confederate states of america. and oklahoma.

- 73Recommend

John Baldwin

Malvern, PA [3 days ago](#)

The GOP is soooo predictable.

Yet another "let them eat cake" response to the plight of low and middle income Americans.

- 23Recommend

Casual Observer

Los Angeles [3 days ago](#)

Their money enables them to live in a parallel universe where what affects all others does not affect them, or that is the perspective which their behavior seems to indicate.

- 5Recommend

George R

CT [3 days ago](#)

I don't think the GOP even wants them to have cake.

- 3Recommend

tecknick

NY [3 days ago](#)

Mrs. Obama went at this the wrong way. She should have used reverse psychology and insisted on junk food being served in school cafeterias. Since the republicans oppose anything Obama (and by extension Mrs. Obama) supports, healthy, nutritious food would be offered as a counter measure.

Works for me

- 60Recommend

gluglutoo

NY [3 days ago](#)

Check out the Key and Peele skit "Obama's Meeting with Republicans". Hilarious.

- 1Recommend

Mitchell

Haddon Heights, NJ [3 days ago](#)

If President Obama said "Breathing is good", 90% of the Republican Party would be dead within 3 minutes.

- 11Recommend

tecknick

NY [2 days ago](#)

Works for me

- Recommend



Ronald Cohen

is a trusted commenter Wilmington, N.C. [3 days ago](#)

Wherever a decline in the quality of life and the health of the nation is proposed you can expect to see RepBags in the forefront. The health of the Nation, fostering "We the People" is not part of the Koch Bros./Exxon/Banker agenda.

- 13Recommend

Charles

USA [3 days ago](#)

You forgot Monsanto.

Oh, I see why.

After his victory in the 2008 election, Obama filled key posts with Monsanto people, in federal agencies that wield tremendous force in food issues, the USDA and the FDA:

At the USDA, as the director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Roger Beachy, former director of the Monsanto Danforth Center.

As deputy commissioner of the FDA, the new food-safety-issues czar, the infamous Michael Taylor, former vice-president for public policy for Monsanto. Taylor had been instrumental in getting approval for Monsanto's genetically engineered bovine growth hormone.

As commissioner of the USDA, Iowa governor, Tom Vilsack. Vilsack had set up a national group, the Governors' Biotechnology Partnership, and had been given a Governor of the Year Award by the Biotechnology Industry Organization, whose members include Monsanto.

As the new Agriculture Trade Representative, who would push GMOs for export, Islam Siddiqui, a former Monsanto lobbyist.

As the new counsel for the USDA, Ramona Romero, who had been corporate counsel for another biotech giant, DuPont.

We should also remember that Obama's former secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, once worked for the Rose law firm. That firm was counsel to Monsanto.

Obama nominated Elena Kagan to the US Supreme Court. Kagan, as federal solicitor general, had previously argued for Monsanto in the Monsanto v. Geertson seed case before the Supreme Court.

- 4Recommend



Cheryl

is a trusted commenter

[3 days ago](#)

Thanks for the reminder of how far Monsanto's tentacles stretch...

- Recommend

David Taylor

Nothern CA [3 days ago](#)

Soo...Obama hired people to sabotage his wife's own goals after letting her get them going? What?

- 3Recommend



Ronald Cohen

is a trusted commenter Wilmington, N.C. [3 days ago](#)

I did not forger Monsanto anymore than I forget Goldman-Sachs, both of which had/have former employees in prominent placed in the Obama Administration. Just as Bechtel, et.al., had in the Bush Administration. Just as MaryJo White came from a securities defense major firm to head the SEC. Just as K Street owns Congress. Have I still missed anyone?

- Recommend

B

Minneapolis [3 days ago](#)

No one in their right mind would oppose healthier food in school lunches. The opposition of House Republicans must be about something else. I think they are opposing anything the Obamas do and any government expense that is not farm or corporate welfare, especially support for the needy.

So, they shoot poor kids in the foot then tout how all Americans have an equal chance to succeed as justification for their refusal to support "the takers". Kids are just pawns in their game, shamefully.

- 41Recommend

Meghan

New York [3 days ago](#)

Why can't schools afford healthy school lunches? Perhaps its due to GOP cuts to education spending and safety net programs at the state and national level.

- 21Recommend

Tracy

Chicago [3 days ago](#)

My own former school district opted out of the new school lunch program because they do not want to lose the revenue that they make from the vending machines with candy, salty snacks and sodas. Many of these decisions have nothing to do with health and everything to do with money. As usual.

- 6Recommend



Joe

Iowa [3 days ago](#)

When will liberals learn that one size does NOT fit all in a large diverse country like the United States? Common core is another example of this kind of magical thinking.

- 2Recommend

HenryB

Sierra Vista, Arizona [3 days ago](#)

A large diverse country with large diverse children. Common Core; adopted by 45 states. Not forced on anybody by the federal government. As a matter of fact, common core was not even developed by the federal government. But perhaps feeding children candy bars and hamburgers and fries and chicken nuggets will grow brain cells after all.

- 4Recommend

Steve

Wayne, PA [3 days ago](#)

It does when the size is XXL, I suppose...

- 14Recommend

Lawrence

Washington D.C. [3 days ago](#)

If seeing parking lots full of xxl's in grade school on the road to diabetes is magical thinking then I guess I'm a gonner.

- 4Recommend

TheAZCowBoy

Tombstone, AZ. [3 days ago](#)

With wall-to-wall 'whales' (DBA: kids?) in America - 88% of them that cannot pass a military physical in AmeriKKKa, isn't it amazing that these kids can 'only' (((handle))) the joy stick on a Predator extra-judicial killing machine?

- 3Recommend

Jim

Long Island [3 days ago](#)

So Joe Exactly in which states does junk food make kids healthier?

And Common Core has been a problem because it leads to teaching to the test and at the expense of all else. I would ask the same question then. In which states is it desirable to have a less educated population?? Testing at a uniform level at least insures interstate competition for teaching methods.

- 5Recommend

DRS

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

Who elected Michelle Obama to fight with and question the elected members of Congress?

- 6Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

Who told Laura Bush to try to encourage kids to read or Nancy Reagan to talk about drugs?

- 70Recommend

scsmits

Orangeburg, SC [3 days ago](#)

No legislation dictates grits instead of tofu or vice versa. If Michelle Obama sees something immoral happening (what you call "playing politics"), then it's her moral duty to oppose it. We should all follow her example.

- 12Recommend

Bill

Charlottesville, VA [3 days ago](#)

She's a citizen, so I guess that would be the Founder's when they wrote the Constitution.

- 31Recommend

George R

CT [3 days ago](#)

It is the right of every citizen to question and challenge their elected officials, and write letters to newspapers. Otherwise you have a dictatorship.

- 8Recommend

Cleo

New Jersey [3 days ago](#)

Neither Laura Bush or Nancy Reagan ever accused elected representatives of "playing politics with children's health." That is playing politics. Let her do what Hilary did, run for office. If the folks in Alabama want to eat grits instead of tofu, let them. Lunchtime: back to my tuna and avocado roll with brown rice.

- 3Recommend

Ally

Minneapolis [3 days ago](#)

Yeah! She sure is uppity!

There's nothing sacrosanct about Congress. Heck, nowadays they're mostly lobbyists and shills and half of them are fairly dimwitted. It's everyone's right to question them. Your authoritarian follower stripes are showing, and it's not a good look. Stand up!

- 8Recommend

Rick

San Francisco [3 days ago](#)

This problem, like so many others, is the result of the super wealthy controlling the electoral and legislative political processes. Grover Nordquist's "starve the government" strategy is working beyond his wildest dreams. If the rich don't pay taxes, there is no money to subsidize healthy school lunches (or breakfasts) for the burgeoning legions of poor American children. The future is here and it's looking pretty awful.

- 16Recommend

NYT Pick

Dee

Montclair, NJ [3 days ago](#)

I wonder how much of this vote was affected by pressure from groups that manufacture and market the food that kids eat. My kids never ate junk food at home and therefore never had a taste for it. They took lunch to school, because they couldn't stand the chicken nugget/hotdog/pizza fare that was served at school. You can't break the habit of junk food without creating an alternative. Indeed, most of the food served in their schools was trucked in, warmed up and served on disposable trays and dishes, causing obscene amounts of garbage. Salad bars are all fine and good, but most kids aren't going to choose this option. Good, decent cooking that is done at the schools is what is needed. You can't tell me that it's cheaper to buy chicken nuggets versus a chicken. Let's bring back kitchens, cooks and re-usable trays. Let's offer decent bread, soups, stews. These don't have to be high cost items, they just have to taste good. I can make a chicken last almost a week, roast chicken day 1, chicken salad sandwiches day 2, chicken pot pie day 3, chicken melt day 4, chicken soup and bread day 5. Or I can buy a box of chicken by-products that are breaded and deep-fried and filled with fat and who knows what other processed synthetic dreck and give up. There are many creative solutions, this country has simply become lazy. Hire some cooks!

- 214Recommend

David Taylor

Nothern CA [3 days ago](#)

Chicken nuggets are cheaper than chicken. Junk food is cheaper than food. Any food that can be augmented to take up more volume/weight with chemicals is going to be cheaper than the real food itself. Chicken nuggets can be made to look like a more voluminous meal by adding more breading made from subsidized wheat. Corn syrup from subsidized corn makes tasteless fruit ripened with gases more palatable.

It's really amazing that Republicans want to put the financial well being of commodity growers and chemical producers over the well being of children, but this is not the first time humans need to be harmed to keep profits up. It's almost as if the Republican Party has degenerated into a mafia like position - profit protection, where any cost to someone else can be ignored.

- 10Recommend

David X

new haven ct [3 days ago](#)

It's not about laziness: actually it's the opposite.

It's an energized, vastly profitable Food-Pharma complex that lobbies massively. MONEY--a great energizer for the infinitely amoral greedy.

- 1Recommend

mt

Riverside CA [3 days ago](#)

Excellent solutions. Bring Back the in -school cooks and give kids real food.

But not all salads are tasteless either. Carrots mass produced are bland and tasteless, but give kids the carrots grown in my brother' s organic farm, and they would fight to eat them. We can produce healthier meals, we just need to do it more creatively.

- 1Recommend

M Hobart

Salt Lake City, UT [3 days ago](#)

I think that much of the opposition is simply based on the fact that Barack and Michelle Obama are behind the nutrition program.

- 1Recommend

ccc_reader

Calif [2 days ago](#)

@Dee. Finally someone has made clear sense out of all of this mess. My best neighbor friend and my Mother-in-law both worked for 2 separate school districts as in-house cooks who prepared delicious, healthy, meals. We used to talk about all of what was prepared by them. Weekly menus using a variety of fresh food that was daily prepared by them in-house. It sounded delicious and put my menus to shame. Both of their kids loved what was served. You can't serve breaded foods or just greens all the time. Why, you ask because kids are growing burning energy and need food that gets them thru the day. example:

football/basketball/swimming/tennis/track/wrestling/ even brain matter needs a variety of fresh, nutritious, tasty "stick to your ribs food". Let's hire in-house cooks again and stop short cuts to save a couple of bucks at the expense of our kids!

- Recommend

NYT Pick

retired teacher

Austin, Texas [3 days ago](#)

Why on earth would we want to lower the quality of school lunches just when we are starting to see progress in reducing childhood obesity? As someone who spent 20+ years in public schools, I find claims by school districts that it is "too expensive" to comply with higher nutrition standards highly suspect, when over 90% of school districts are in compliance with the new guidelines. Following the money, the School Nutrition Association which is largely behind this push to over rule science based nutrition standards includes companies

that produce food items sold in schools. Will districts granted waivers still receive federal funds to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables even though they are no longer required required to buy them?

- 142Recommend

Scott

NYC [3 days ago](#)

If indeed compliance with fruit and vegetable requirements is too expensive, its because the Republicans are paying the farmers not to grow the produce. How about taking away the farm subsidies before denying school children healthy lunches?

- 24Recommend

NYT Pick

Pete

New Jersey [3 days ago](#)

We all know that "junk food" provides the maximum number of calories at the least cost. We also know that foods with large amounts of fats and sugars "taste better." But then we also understand that too many Americans, and too many children, are obese. These two facts are not unrelated.

Therefore it comes as no surprise that some school districts want to save money by serving less-nutritious food (I am trying to avoid using the term "junk food" in every sentence), and also their claim that children "don't like" the nutritious food as much. But that doesn't avoid the truth that the food they would like to serve simply is less healthy. That is exactly why these arguments should be pushed back, rather than accepted and made into law.

Lastly, it is hard to believe that various agri-businesses are not behind the push to include potatoes in the category of healthy foods (what, we shouldn't be in favor of french fries?), just as the tomato sauce on a pizza should not qualify as a vegetable. These are simply business moves to increase the profitability of some segments of the economy, rather than to put the health of our children first.

- 128Recommend

David X

new haven ct [3 days ago](#)

Junk food is cheaper because it's subsidized by our tax dollars.

But it's not cheaper really because it raises our healthcare costs hugely.

That's the money part. The older and more cynical I get, the more I feel that money is the only part. "Put the health of our children first"? In what USA do we see anyone's health put before Food-Pharma profits?

- 1Recommend

Joe

Scranton,Pa [3 days ago](#)

As anyone who's ever made a permanent shift in their diet - I did 13 years ago - knows, it's hard. It takes time. But once you get used to proper eating, it becomes a part of your life and impossible to go back to the garbage.

Also, the richest country in history doesn't have money to fund schools or pay for good food for them. This is madness.

Finally, let's remember, this is political. There are those on the right that hate the Obamas and want to do anything they can to deny them legislative/policy achievements...even literally at the expense of children.

- 99Recommend

David X

new haven ct [3 days ago](#)

I agree...except about the part that eating in a healthy way is "hard"--at least in the sense I think you mean. There is fantastic healthy and tasty food to be found.

But beware! More and more, as food becomes almost totally industrialized, one must be educated in the details of what's healthy. One example: fish. Farm-raised is 99% of the time disastrous food. Wild-caught or ethically farmed, great food.

The Big Food industry will lobby for ineffective labeling and will label deceptively whenever they can for profit.

- Recommend

Ms C

Bayonne, NJ [3 days ago](#)

If red states want to opt out of offering proper nutrition in their school lunches, fine. If they are willing to forego federal nutritional guidelines, then they can forego federal funding. Let them feed their kids chicken fingers, burgers and fries on their own dime.

- 85Recommend

MG

Kirkland WA [3 days ago](#)

I share the impulse to just wipe our hands of the remnants of the Confederacy once and for all, but it won't work. Children need protection and whatever help we can offer, no matter how deficient their social system. I have to believe that those who feel that providing nutritious meals is a PC plot to turn their children away from Godliness will continue to be on the wrong side of history.

- 12Recommend

Jen in Astoria

Astoria NY [3 days ago](#)

Why am I so NOT surprised that opposition to healthy school lunches is coming from that cultural and educational powerhouse ALABAMA?

- 139Recommend

MAS

MI [3 days ago](#)

Do you mean "nutritional and educational powerhouse"? Cultural is subjective.

- 2Recommend



Cheryl

is a trusted commenter
[3 days ago](#)

If the problem really is that many children find healthy food strange and unappealing - then [I can hear the screaming already] -- it should be introduced by adults sitting with children in early years and celebrating good eating - and good behavior as well. There should be demos of how you prepare food, where it comes from etc. How early? In the pre-k programs we so desperately need everywhere. In Kindergarten and elementary schools.

- 7Recommend

Jack

Illinois [3 days ago](#)

We should not swallow all this talk that kids wholesale hate their "new" food and throw it all away. To me it sounds like more Repub propaganda. I have read how school cafeteria people, the real experts on this topic, see kids are adapting, adjusting to new things. And now we can read how kids are now getting used to their "new" change and just go right along with the program, and eating better, too.

We as adults, parents, citizens do our children no good if we succumb to their habits to eat unhealthy and our reluctance to do the work to change those bad habits.

- 14Recommend

AyCaray

Utah [3 days ago](#)

As a former elementary school principal, I know that students throw away much of what is on their trays --no matter what the food is; healthy or unhealthy. The school's community council and kitchen management sat together and discussed possible reasons for this phenomenon. Clearly, the children looked forward to eating, so we asked, why would the children throw away their food after a few minutes of picking at it? Was it the quality? the quantity? the presentation? Could it be the short time allowed for eating and playing? Was playing more important to them than eating? When questions like that emerged, solutions were proposed. It was decided that we would have a two months trial, whereby children would go to recess first, and then, return to the building for lunch. Some teachers took it a step further and got the children to take their trays to the classroom. Teachers would read to them while children ate, and eat they did. The waste was reduced, and children were more calm for the afternoon session. The only unhappy person was the custodian who had to set up a garbage can and a tray table next to the classroom door. Extra work. At the end of the two-month trial, it was decided to continue serving lunch after recess. At the end of the year, I was transferred to another school, and the new administrator went back to the traditional schedule. Result? More wasted food.

- 76Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

Being read to while eating, what a great idea! I would have loved that.

- 13Recommend

blgreenie

New Jersey [3 days ago](#)

Amidst the comments here with a political slant, here is one that really makes sense. For children, for most of us actually, eating can be, should be. a comforting experience with our friends and families. Have you stepped into a school lunch room? When I have, it's anything but comforting. Lots of talking, laughing, noise, activity. Hardly comforting. At home, breakfast time with family is often non-existent and dinner hurried so people can rush off for electronics or whatever.

How comforting for someone to read to children in their classroom while they eat. No wonder they do so. A loving thing to do. A local intervention; something that's unlikely to be mandated from Washington.

- 6Recommend

Cathy

Dayton, Ohio [3 days ago](#)

Great example of problem solving! If the new rules aimed at making school lunches healthier are problematic, why can't solutions be explored that don't compromise the chief objective? We shouldn't settle for opting out of nutritional guidelines. It's unfortunate that your good work was overturned.

- 3Recommend

Jane

Durham NC [3 days ago](#)

The "School Nutrition Association" is heavily aligned with the food industry. Check out the "Domino's Smart Slice" program and the other food industry promotions linked to their website. If they are truly to be the voice of proper nutrition in schools, they should at least pretend to be objective.

- 15Recommend

Steve Goldberg

nyc [3 days ago](#)

When are we going to take large corporations (with even larger campaign contributions) off welfare? Now they are paying Congress to insure kids eat candy bars and drink soda at public expense.

- 25Recommend

jck

nj [3 days ago](#)

Doesn't Michelle Obama have a better cause to devote her energies to than banning white potatoes from school lunches? On one day she is dedicated to reducing childhood hunger and on the next she is battling childhood obesity. Even she must be confused by the discordant messages.

- 2Recommend



Paulo Ferreira

White Plains, NY [3 days ago](#)

JCK, When children eat mostly sugars hunger and obesity are one and the same.

- 27Recommend

demilicious

Sunnyland [3 days ago](#)

what a mean spirited thing to say..Childhood hunger and childhood obesity are not mutually exclusive..Sadly many of our most obese are also nutritionally starving for healthy nutrients..

Mrs. Obama's tireless work over many years has seen fit to include childhood health officials, chefs and many others dedicated to battle this looming crisis which our children will suffer from..to reduce it to banning "white potatoes" in truly sad & so ignorant!

- 20Recommend

cagy

Washington DC [3 days ago](#)

The title of story alone is Beyond the capacity of a rational mind to comprehend. Vote to opt out of healthy foods. One of the worst dumbest movies ever made, "Idiocracy" is oddly more truth than fiction. What dooms this country isn't guns, too big to fail, wars, it's stupidity run amok (which cause the other mentioned problems as well). As Einstein said- "Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe." Scientist's theory proven correct by politicians. Un frikkin believeable.

- 13Recommend

Francisco Delgado

Boston, MA [3 days ago](#)

Even in one of the world's richest country, some schools still find it expensive to feed their students healthy meals. That's the saddest thing here.

- 13Recommend



profscam

Milwaukee [3 days ago](#)

Lots of knee-jerk GOP bashing here. But it isn't what the kids eat at school that's making so many of them tubby. It's what they eat at home. And the populations with the highest rates of childhood obesity are among the most reliable voters for the Democratic Party. Physician, heal thyself!

- 3Recommend

Steve Goldberg

nyc [3 days ago](#)

Very good -- just make up your own facts to make a point. Where do you get the idea that Democrats spawn the highest rates of childhood obesity?

- 24Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

Red states have a higher rate of obesity. Who's running things there?

- 34Recommend



Dr. Harriet A. Fields

Washington, DC [3 days ago](#)

It is so clear now the intent of the majority in the House of Representatives to dismantle our system of government at every available opportunity - established to protect the vulnerable. The House seems single mindedly to assault at every step any initiative to enhance the quality of life of our society. Now attacking the health of children. For shame. Indeed, we cannot really proclaim that our country is a model and beacon for the world of hope and freedom. It is rather becoming in Washington a shill for corporate interests that line our politicians pockets. Since the well-funded interests shape who runs for office, where is the American public's choice? Let us take back our government. Question, write, protest, demand accountability. Take a look at us walking down the street anywhere in the world - Americans can always be spotted, obese. Then we populate our "sick care" for profit fee for service delivery system with preventable chronic diseases when we are adults. We are all capable of much better than we have now. Please

- 33Recommend

David

Ann Arbor, MI [3 days ago](#)

“Just because math and science programs in schools are hard, you don’t throw out the courses.”

Unless the science fails to conform to your personal belief system about evolution, climate change, etc. Then you try to throw out the courses too.

- 34Recommend

Dick Diamond

Bay City, Oregon [3 days ago](#)

God forbid we should have healthy children in the schools. How horrible. Coming from the most obese part of the country, the South, this is putting lard food that causes obesity. What else is new?

- 15Recommend

NYT Pick

RH

Georgia [3 days ago](#)

The School Nutrition Association should be in the forefront of this effort --not bringing up the rear with excuses. And it is a very lazy answer to blame the kids for not having appealing healthy food, Feeding our children healthfully should be one of our country's top priorities, including moneywise. I can't believe any member of Congress thinks the status quo is ok.

- 69Recommend

Chantel

By the Sea [3 days ago](#)

Now me and mine will have to pay even higher insurance premiums for the kids who remain obese into adulthood.

Thanks again, gop.

- 18Recommend



Jordan Davies

is a trusted commenter Vermont [3 days ago](#)

"Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy at the Washington-based Center for Science in the Public Interest, said the legislation is an attempt to gut school lunch and snack standards.

"We need to help schools that may struggle to implement the rules, not roll back standards," she said. "Just because math and science programs in schools are hard, you don't throw out the courses."

It is little wonder that some children throw away their food, the healthy food that they might eat instead of the salt and sugar heavy foods in many schools. This is nothing less than a fundamental attempt to make large profits by food "producers" which are undermining the health of our children. Why not read any number of books on the subject of unhealthy food marketed by giant companies to get an idea of how bad the situation is. For example any book by Michael Pollan would be a starting point, especially "The Omnivore's Dilemma".

Or for an argument on the dangers of sugar see:

<http://www.globalhealingcenter.com/sugar-problem/refined-sugar-the-sweet...>

"Refined sugar is lethal when ingested by humans because it provides only that which nutritionists describe as "empty" or "naked" calories. It lacks the natural minerals which are present in the sugar beet or cane."

- 12Recommend

EJZimmerman

Chestertown, MD [3 days ago](#)

It's what our institutions have been doing for decades: lower the standards little by little, and try to fool citizens with misinformation, "polls," foot dragging, and issue distractions. Get them to adopt gambling in order to fund the bare necessities, but don't let them know what happened to their actual tax dollars.

- Recommend

Mae Overman

Purvis, MS [3 days ago](#)

I believe this should not be a federal issue. What is good nutrition for 1 child may not be good nutrition for another. Some children are very thin & over active, help on the farm before/after school, are athletes, etc. Active children may need different kinds of meals than sedentary children & differing metabolisms may dictate different nutritional needs. Michelle is a big strapping woman who probably needs to keep away from large portions of meat & potatoes so she thinks everyone should. Some people remain thin no matter how much meats & starches they eat. Nutritional requirements differ among people & should not be legislated as this could be unhealthy for some. I have a dietitian who works with me so I can eat nutritionally for MY body. Nutrition is not a one size fits all thing otherwise there would be no need for dietitians as we could have the government dictate to us all what we all have to eat. Additionally, I believe in States Rights & if nutrition is to be legislated it should be at a county level where they understand the nutritional needs of the majority in their community. Big Brother is dictating too much in our personal lives these days & this is just one more thing they've added to their list to control "we the people".

- 3Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

Junk food isn't healthy for anyone.

- 24Recommend

Casual Observer

Los Angeles [3 days ago](#)

It's not big brother or the nanny state, it's sharing wisdom that was acquired in ways that people would not acquire just by being alive.

Fresh fruits and vegetables of all colors contain a lot more minerals and vitamins than do complex carbohydrates, meats, and fat which provide a lot of concentrated energy. People, especially those who are growing need both, and they need more of the former if they are not burning calories like lumberjacks.

Now the fact is that until the 19th century, most people thought that all food was equally nutritious, and the importance of vitamins and minerals was pretty much unknown, and many people lived on whatever foods were plentiful and satisfied hunger. Now we know better but it's not knowledge about which we have instinctual understanding, it's knowledge that we have to teach to people to enable them to understand why it's important to eat a balanced diet.

- 2Recommend

HT

is a trusted commenter Ohio [3 days ago](#)

This is about how federal funds are spent. Before these new rules were put in place, my kids school district offered nachos for lunch. Do you honestly want your tax dollars to be spent so that school districts can feed nachos to poor kids who can't afford a lunch at all?

As for the rest of your post..Big Brother isn't stopping you for sending your kid to school with a bag lunch. If you don't like the school lunches, then pack your own!

- 2Recommend

hds379

miami beach [3 days ago](#)

Make the large corporations enjoying subsidies from our government foot the bill for healthy food for our kids in school. What hogwash. The question to ask is how can we not afford to give kids healthy meals. Pizza is not a vegetable.

- 16Recommend

NYT Pick

jhussey41

Illinois [3 days ago](#)

Variety is the spice of life. As a former school board member who lived under these federal guidelines, the kids in our district just will not eat the "healthy" school lunches. Instead, they go hungry in the afternoon. Or the kids sneak in food from home. When we banned cookies and cupcakes from birthday celebrations in the classes, the parent howled. We also banned sweets from home and now the teachers and principals are the food police. Great for education. Another government "do-gooder" program run amok.

As country, we decided that marijuana is not a threat and yet we have determined that "foods that kids like" are a threat to national security! I really appreciate Mrs. Obama's motives here but for goodness sakes, can we just let the kids eat "healthier foods they want"? Hunger does not mix well with learning. We all know that.

- 16Recommend

LaDee Dah

Superbia USA [3 days ago](#)

"As country, we decided that marijuana is not a threat..."
WRONG -- marijuana is still illegal at the Federal level. A limited number of states have decided to regulate and tax marijuana for medical and/or recreational use.

- 1Recommend

j

nj [3 days ago](#)

Sugar does not mix well with learning, either.

- 1Recommend

EJZimmerman

Chestertown, MD [3 days ago](#)

Yeah, I put an end to the sneaking in the afternoon and at night. I put a keyed lock on my pantry, and stopped buy most processed foods.

- Recommend

DocMorgan

Northern California [3 days ago](#)

Bad idea to play a don't like it card or related. The School should educate the kids and possibly they will educate the parents and picket the vendors of junk and keep it out of the schools. The stake here are the dozens of chains selling junk food and those endless cases of it at the markets. They get the space as they're profit driven. Look at our population. We're unheathy and need to return to other than sugar or fat reinforced food. It with ignorance kills.

- Recommend

NL

West Hollywood, CA [3 days ago](#)

No, we cannot.

Children, as you know, appreciate and expect boundaries and guidelines.

If a child sneaks food in the bathroom, then that child is not going hungry. How long do you think a child can reasonably skip lunch, day after day? Be hungry or eat - the choices aren't that difficult.

I agree that lunches need to be freshly prepared. Let the schools figure out how to do it.

My first thought, in agreement with someone above, was that the Repubs found a way to extend corporate profits in homage to the Big Food/Big Agra lobbyists.

- 3Recommend

mms

nj [3 days ago](#)

"....sneak in food from home...." This sentence tells you everything. If the parents are too lazy or foolish to care properly for their children, then the government should leave them be. You can't change a mindset or make people responsible. In the end, their children are their responsibility. Put the information out there. And the people that ignore it? Lousy parents. Period. They choose to bring these young people into the world. It's their choose to make a mess of parenting.

- 1Recommend

sharon

worcester county, ma [3 days ago](#)

Where in this guideline proposal are they forcing children to BUY the school lunch rather than bringing one from home? Where are they banning cookies and other desserts if the children bring a lunch from home? Disingenuous much?

- 4Recommend

Stacy

Manhattan [3 days ago](#)

The idea that children cannot, and should not, be made to eat healthy food is nonsense. In my own childhood in the 1960s and 1970s every kid I knew was expected to sit down nightly to a dinner shared by the whole family. No mother (and it was mothers) prepared special "kid-friendly" meals for just the children of the family. And if you go back another generation it was even less likely that children would be specially accommodated. In other cultures, today, this still prevails. Do the French, or the Indians, give their children bland mac-n-cheese from a box night after night. No. Our kids expect this because we've raised them to expect it. The problem starts with adults, and needs to end with adults. Just say no. And yes, I am a mother. Been there, done that.

- 3Recommend

MT

Los Angeles [3 days ago](#)

By that logic, if a kid refuses to eat nutritious food at home, parents should capitulate and let the kid eat potato chips and cake for dinner. Or maybe Junior doesn't actually want to do his homework because it gives him a headache. Let him watch cartoons!

- 2Recommend

NL

West Hollywood, CA [3 days ago](#)

Jhussey also claimed that we decided that not eating healthy is a national security threat. In addition to finding other flaws in his/her argument, I decided to try to stay on topic.

Since this is a federal lunch program, I have no objection to legislation mandating healthy/healthier foods. It's our tax money.

The other federal programs may ultimately deal with too many of the lifestyle choices as they manifest in costly, yet preventable, illnesses/healthcare.

Promote smart choices and wellness where you can. Encourage healthy behavior whenever you can. We have a responsibility as a community. Start a healthy cycle somewhere. Put your foot/feet down.

This got a little out of hand, I think.

- 1Recommend

mt

Riverside CA [2 days ago](#)

Healthy, nutritious food can also be tasty if prepared correctly. Just giving kids bland tasteless mass produced carrot sticks will not do it. I grew up on a farm, and our carrots were so sweet they were as good as candy. We should be promoting smaller farms producing healthy and tasty produce, and introducing children to these items, This requires commitment, time, imagination and money. Budget cuts don't help. But we must do it, not retreat to offering meals with no nutrition.

And home prepared tomato sauce served on a pizza does constitute it being considered a vegetable. Tomatoes are one of the vegetables whose vitamin content is increased, or at least maintained through processing. I'm not referring to commercially prepared pizzas, which are junk food. I'm referring to using our imagination and knowledge of nutrition to help solve this process.

- Recommend

NYT Pick

MilwaukeeWoman1

Milwaukee [3 days ago](#)

First, as the article notes, and every parent knows, kids will "waste" food; that is, they may refuse to eat particular foods at particular stages of development. Young children often are wary of new foods. Over time, and with patient re-introduction, they usually become accustomed to them. And, yes, a lot of kids would rather have ice cream and cookies for lunch than a balanced, nutritious meal. This is nothing new. It is the responsibility of adults to ensure that they learn good eating habits. That said, there is no evidence that the new school meal guidelines are "too expensive". Rather, the adults in charge don't want to make the effort to change. In that case, they need to make a career change out of education. It's that simple.

- 93Recommend

EJZimmerman

Chestertown, MD [3 days ago](#)

Pack their lunch and let them go hungry if they refuse to eat it.

- 4Recommend

jhussey41

Illinois [3 days ago](#)

The current healthy food is not too expensive. It is inedible for children. Schools have the student for one meal per day (two meals if Title 1 for breakfast). The most expensive meal is the meal not eaten. Children are not going to have the palate of an adult. There is a middle ground between cupcakes and kale. Loosening the definitions of "healthy food" and adding a criteria to the guidelines for "food that children will actually eat"

might help.

You are completely wrong about the school staff not trying. Everyone at school is tearing their hair out trying to get the kids to eat the healthy stuff. Its not easy. So, what do you want? Hungry poor kids who cannot afford food from home sitting next to wealthier kids eating from their illegal stash of Oreos from home? Talk about income inequality. That is behind the outcry. This is not a political issue. Its not a "dis" on Mrs. Obama (who everybody likes). The guidelines are not working. That is the issue.

- 3Recommend

sweeney

boston [3 days ago](#)

It is not the responsibility of all adults, just their parents

- 1Recommend

J. Ice

Columbus, OH [3 days ago](#)

It isn't the "educators" - it's the lobbyists of the fast food industry - and our bought and paid for politicians.

- 5Recommend



Socrates

Verona, N.J. [3 days ago](#)

A great day for the potato chip, french fries, ketchup, salt, corn syrup, Fortune 1000 profits and spiraling health care costs.

Thank you, GOP Diabetes, Obesity and Death Panels.

In no other country is a major political party working so hard against the futures of its own citizens in so many ways.

Disgraceful right-wing, American exceptionalism.

- 202Recommend

KZ

Middlesex County, NJ [3 days ago](#)

Agreed, but sadly it's not just right wingers to blame. Tom Vilsack is a Democrat...the former Governor of Iowa, home of high-fructose corn syrup. It's Big Food, Big Money. Kids' health is way down the list of priorities.

- 2Recommend

Cindy

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

Part of race to the bottom when it comes to our children and schools. We demand excellence and yet provide ever dwindling support across all fronts but especially financial.

- 27Recommend

Charles

USA [3 days ago](#)

A government that attempts to dictate diet is a government deserving of overthrow.

- 2Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

But you're OK with government supplied junk food?

- 26Recommend

EJZimmerman

Chestertown, MD [3 days ago](#)

Well, sure, THAT will make some corporation wealthy, and then they will give money to a Congressperson to keep up their good work.

- 7Recommend

gluglutoo

NY [3 days ago](#)

You and your children can eat whatever you want. No one is forcing children to eat school lunch or breakfast. At home you decide what to fill your pantry with. At school the government decides. Obama is "The Decider".

- 4Recommend

Casual Observer

Los Angeles [3 days ago](#)

A people who do not feed their children what makes them healthy, squanders it's future.

- 8Recommend

lizbrent

hfd152 [3 days ago](#)

If you have ever tried the so-called healthy meals most schools are implementing, you would understand why these programs are failing. Microwaved whole wheat glop with low salt goo on top and mushy fruit isn't going to win any converts. To implement change properly schools need more time for lunch (which requires more space) and facilities to prepare fresh food on site. All of this requires more money and more staff. Our school district can't find money for teachers and paper and we are a pretty wealthy school district...

- 9Recommend

Cathy

Hopewell Jct NY [3 days ago](#)

I could only recommend you comment once, which is unfortunate.

The goal is great, the implementation is awful. And food that ends up in the trash is just state funded compost, which does not actually make children healthier.

Good food is expensive, and it will take time to rework menus to get a number of items available that most kids will eat. Why isn't implementation phased in - get rid of the egregious offenders (cheese fries, soda, nuggets) roll in easy fixes (whole grain breads) and work a staged introduction to meet the full goal? Our school menus got so bad over time because budget constraints, out sourcing, food costs all contributed overtime. Why would we believe we can fix this overnight?

- 3Recommend

Chris

nowhere I can tell you [3 days ago](#)

Bet they have lots of money for parks and a fancy office building.

- 5Recommend

Jen

Indiana [3 days ago](#)

I don't think all the schools are that bad. I eat lunch with my kids on occasion and their meals are quite good, and we live in a poorer area. Yesterday when I was there we had spaghetti with a wheat breadstick, a cantaloupe slice, cooked carrots, canned pears and milk. It was fine. It tasted under salted to me but that's because I grew up eating bad food. The kids didn't complain, really!

- 4Recommend

Rick West

Denver, Colorado [3 days ago](#)

Will the names of parents and students who opt out be available to future employers and health insurance companies? I sure would like those with future poor health do to diet to foot a larger bill for their future health needs.

- 4Recommend

LaDee Dah

Superbia USA [3 days ago](#)

Uh, this is a program to let entire SCHOOLS (not individual parents/families) opt out of the program. Wholesale destruction of efforts to get healthy food to kids and communities that have the least access to these kinds of foods.

- 7Recommend

Ally

Minneapolis [3 days ago](#)

What kind of anti-government, pro-market psychotic do you have to be to use the school lunch program as your "big stand" against Michelle Obama or President Obama or socialism or Marxism or whatever the Republicans' silly rage-du-jour may be? I thought we wanted to spend government dollars wisely? What could be wiser than ensuring children get a healthy meal?

I wish Republicans would just stop pretending. We can all see through this one, and it's embarrassing.

- 70Recommend

EJZimmerman

Chestertown, MD [3 days ago](#)

Probably wishing the rest of us will kill ourselves with fried chicken and cornbread, with ketchup as our veggie and classic coke to drink. (Love those things, but I'll just have the watermelon, thanks.)

- 6Recommend



Krish

SF Bay Area [3 days ago](#)

If kids want their choice of meals, the southern states will sure oblige.

They have lot of experience in preparing choice last meals.

- 13Recommend

Mike Davitian

San Francisco [3 days ago](#)

Angry about out-of-control government spending? Me too! Maybe we should stop spending a fortune through Medicare/Medicaid to fix obesity problems after they've caused serious medical harm and prevent them before they start. \$20 billion for child nutrition? That's a bargain!

Also, please recall that bagged lunches are still permissible, so please refrain from using phrases like "tyranny". It's a school lunch program, not a Nazi invasion.

- 14Recommend

O'Brien

Airstrip One [3 days ago](#)

Let them drink all the soylent they can handle. Cheap. Good for them. No muss. No mess. End of issue.

- 3Recommend

NYT Pick

Casual Observer

Los Angeles [3 days ago](#)

The benefits from good nutrition for children is both immediate and long-term, so instead of delaying the implementation, the Republicans ought to provide whatever funds are needed to make it happen. I don't know what they are thinking. Children who are fed nutritious food, feel better, act better and do better almost immediately. Over a life time the better growth and development of their bodies results in healthier, smarter and

more resilient people who will need less care for chronic conditions and will be able to be more productive throughout their lives. The extra money spent now will be reimbursed over the long run.

- 50Recommend

kmadd

Portland, Oregon [3 days ago](#)

They aren't thinking, that is the problem. Somewhere along the line these children will be running the government when they are old and withered...
Hopefully Karma rises its ugly head.

- 1Recommend

Steve

Western Massachusetts [3 days ago](#)

I agree that good nutrition has immediate and long term benefits. You ask what the Republicans are thinking by opposing the nutritional program - Republicans are thinking that they don't want "smarter" kids - they want kids educated just enough to believe in the GOP political vision and be satisfied working minimum wage jobs. Truly smart kids (due in part to eating well) grow up to be thoughtful and inquisitive, and less likely to accept anyone's dogma. Seriously, this issue, whether the goals of public education are to create a manageable workforce vs. an enlightened population, has been a tension in education ever since public schooling was invented.

- Recommend

A liberal in Texas

Houston [3 days ago](#)

The Republicans only care about children when they are in womb.

- 34Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

They don't care about them in the womb. If they did they'd make sure that mothers get adequate nutrition and medical care.

- 12Recommend

Michael

Birmingham [3 days ago](#)

Southern school systems spend like drunken sailors when it comes to athletics, but can't afford the cost of a good meal to keep kids healthy--in the least healthy part of the country. My guess is that these children are being victimized by the same Obama-hating that prevents states like Alabama from expanding Medicaid roles.

- 36Recommend

Tadd T.

Bloomington, IL [3 days ago](#)

It's sad, horrible and unfair that it is always more expensive to eat a healthy, balanced diet, and I don't believe a real solution exists. From what agricultural experts say, there is no way to quickly, sustainably AND cost-effectively produce food in adequate quantities.

- Recommend



Dalou

Nyc [3 days ago](#)

The government programs should have the highest standards and be nutritionally beneficial to the student. Therefore, money should not be the main criteria for providing a school lunch.

- 11Recommend

Holden Korb

Atlanta, GA [3 days ago](#)

It takes a peculiar mind to think that the education system shouldn't play a role in teaching children to eat.

- 17Recommend

NYT Pick



Iver Thompson

Pasadena, CA [3 days ago](#)

I teach at a Title 1 school in LA where every student qualifies for a free lunch. From what I see of the food at school here, what's at fault is not the food but how they prepare it. Years ago there was a fabricate manager who actually cooked and most of the food got eaten. Now all the food is prepared and packaged centrally and sent to each school in impenetrable packaging.

Even if the kids do manage to get the package open and the food out, they usually end up throwing it away because in the process of cooking it, packaging it, then reheating it to serve, it goes from institutional style to horribly inedible.

I really don't agree that the food is the problem, it's what a bureaucracy can do to it that turns it into a problem. If they'd just bring back people who could cook, things might not be in the mess that they are regarding school food.

- 117Recommend

j

nj [3 days ago](#)

I, too, worked in a school and this is so true. My school did not have a kitchen. All they had was a microwave. Everything was heated by microwave and served to the children. It did not smell appetizing. Teachers brought their lunches and ate in the lounge. Part of the problem, though, is space. Our school simply did not have the space for a kitchen, or even enough classrooms. All townships need to support healthy nutrition by supporting schools and building the space for a kitchen. This, of course, requires tax dollars. I am frankly surprised that so many cities refuse to raise taxes. One of the things that kept home prices soaring, even in our most recent recession, was the quality of our schools. They are more than worth their cost, a fact other townships might want to consider.

- 1Recommend

mt

Riverside CA [2 days ago](#)

Please bring back the cooks, who can serve children real food.

- Recommend

Steve R

NY [3 days ago](#)

Now Congress is not only failing to pass new laws to help our country's children; it is getting rid of one that is already doing good. I wish I could say that this is unbelievable, but it is really just more sad stuff.

- 14Recommend

George R

CT [3 days ago](#)

Why does EVERYTHING have to boil down to Democrats versus Republicans? Can't we agree on something as basic a human necessity as food and nutrition? if any politician at the federal, state or local levels crosses the aisle, they are branded as traitors.

- 13Recommend

KT

WI [3 days ago](#)

Agreed. Plus...I find it INSANELY hypocritical that they're trying to "help" schools by letting them opt out of this program because the good food is too expensive. It's too expensive because the government subsidizes corn and sugar and NOT fruits and veggies! Doesn't anyone see that any government "help" in our diets only leads to a higher production and consumption of processed foods???

- 12Recommend

Casual Observer

Los Angeles [3 days ago](#)

"...“Everyone supports healthy meals for children,” Mr. Aderholt said. “But the bottom line is that schools are finding it’s too much, too quick.”...”

Does he understand that about which he is talking? People grow from conception to about 25 years of age. When the food that they have is insufficient to their needs they just don't the same well constructed tissues as they would if they had. One can replace lost money but never lost time.

- 12Recommend



ibLoG

Canada [3 days ago](#)

As Karl Rove had said in his twitter that problems create opportunity, in this case is for medical industry, pharmaceutical industry, etc.

- 6Recommend

BG

Pittsburgh PA [3 days ago](#)

It's shameful. Republicans don't want our school children to eat healthy food at their school lunches because the idea was promoted by Mrs. Obama. I can't believe we are having this discussion. Please remember to vote in November and kick these dopes out of office.

- 18Recommend

A Guy

Lower Manhattan [3 days ago](#)

Obama should spearhead a new program that tries to get pizza, fries, burgers, and soda as the staples of the public school lunch and outlaws vegetables.

Republicans will go against it because they go against everything Obama tries to do and we will wind up with healthy lunches.

- 19Recommend

Sam

Wellesley, Ma [3 days ago](#)

Its just kids who are the long term future of the country.

Democracy is not very good at taking a longer term view whether it is this or climate change or dealing with entitlement issues notwithstanding that the dems are ready to deal on all three.

- 1Recommend

Blue State

here [3 days ago](#)

Sounds like more Darwin award candidates, vying for best in show. Let's see which school systems opt out of healthy children; my bet is the red ones.

- 6Recommend

augusta nimmo

atascadero, ca [3 days ago](#)

school lunches a disgrace when i was a school librarian. all pre-packaged and trucked in. could hardly get worse it seemed like at the time but sure current crop of mean, small minded congressional republicans can make children's meals truly horrible and unhealthy. thanks for nothing yet again, loser congress.

- 9Recommend

Dave

Albuquerque, NM [3 days ago](#)

This is not a funding or spending issue. Its a control issue. The idea that the Federal government should control what is served to children in local school districts is preposterous. Let local school districts decide what the kids in their district eat without intervention from the White House. Michelle Obama means well, but the role of the Feds should be in educating about food choices, not forcing them on people.

- 4Recommend

Joe A

Denver CO [3 days ago](#)

The National School Lunch Program is a Federal cooperative grant program--no school district has to be a part of it, and follow its rules, if it does not want to. And there are many, many examples of how especially younger children's eating habits have been improved by trying, and liking, the healthful offerings in school lunch, including fruits and vegetables. So there's no control unless you sign up, to follow the rules to get the Federal reimbursement--

- 12Recommend

Bill R

Madison VA [3 days ago](#)

Let's have local control and local funding. Slogan - "You get what you pay for."

- 1Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

But you're OK with businesses that peddle junk food putting their products into schools, right?

- 1Recommend



H Pylori

Florida [3 days ago](#)

Oh my god, the depths to which these TeaPublicans will sink solely to obstruct anything that the President attempts is beyond comprehension. Playing their cynical political games with children's health is beyond the pale.

- 12Recommend

Tango

New York NY [3 days ago](#)

The first Lady has been at the forefront of healthy eating. Too bad most of U S doesn't follow her advice

- 4Recommend

Craig

Killingly, CT [3 days ago](#)

Of course, most schools will opt out. For those poor kids affected, the one good meal they get daily will be gone. Good job, Congress.

- 10Recommend

NCain

Westchester [3 days ago](#)

"The School Nutrition Association, a group composed of school nutritionists, praised the legislation". Would it be too cynical of me to assume that the School Nutrition Association is motivated by something other than the nutrition and health of our school children.

- 13Recommend

Rick

Boston [3 days ago](#)

If the Republicans outlaw fruits and vegetables, soon only outlaws will have fruits and vegetables!

- 16Recommend

NYT Pick

Nathan

Sacramento, CA [3 days ago](#)

I genuinely doubt that there are people who are truly opposed to giving children more nutritious lunches. However, with decreasing support for education nationwide I can believe that some schools particularly in rural and destitute areas are finding it difficult to provide adequate food with their budget. I think that this means we should be also addressing the elephant in the room. As a society we subsidize corn and soy at far higher levels than any other crops. Ultimately, this results in the overproduction of corn and soy which corresponds to cheap high calorie low nutrition food for everyone. While the existing subsidies including farm insurance probably have a negligible impact on the price of corn given the sheer volume. Its overproduction excludes available agricultural land for more healthy alternatives. Consider just a 1% or 2% decrease in corn production combined with subsidizing insurance for specialty crops could result in an increase in production between 22% and 44% which would be a substantial decrease in the price of healthy alternatives. This would make healthy eating more accessible to the masses and relieve the budget burden for schools. Not to mention the positive downstream benefits of increased productivity and decreased health costs. In short let's keep the program and higher standards and making healthy eating a national priority.

- 34Recommend

mt

Riverside CA [2 days ago](#)

Brilliant, practical solutions.

- Recommend

Chris

nowhere I can tell you [3 days ago](#)

In Las Vegas the remains of the buffets are ground up to feed pigs. Maybe this should be the new school lunch program. But on the other hand, can see kids saying to their parent, "I don't have to eat healthy food, congress says I don't . And I don't care if you spend money to make me healthy, you're wasting it and it is child abuse to feed me healthy food."

Hail Congress! Worship twinkles and McDonalds fat!

- 5Recommend



PB

CNY [3 days ago](#)

Circulated by Rockville Centre Democratic Club

Given the number of bills the Republicans have blocked, filibustered, obstructed, and voted against, I think we have enough evidence by now to conclude that the Republicans really don't care about the health, nutrition, safety, well being, and education of other people's children.

Much of the GOP's negative attacks on anything and everything Obama and Michelle try to do is merely anchored in ugly racist partisan politics. But for heavens sakes, don't take it out on the children. Seriously, the GOP is not good for this nation's health, and its members need to wear a warning label.

I guess the Republicans can campaign on: "Want America's children to be fed unhealthy, less nutritious, and cheap food? Vote Republican!"

- 17Recommend

pkbormes

Brookline, Mass. [3 days ago](#)

The wealthy congresspersons who don't feel it's necessary to feed other people's children properly would never allow the posh private schools their own kids attend to provide such trash in the lunchroom.

They're becoming more Dickensian by the day. Maybe they should just eliminate public schools and send the kids to workhouses instead.

The only thing (aside from voting out the GOP, which would be a GREAT thing) that would get our right wing corporatists to take proper care of our most vulnerable children would be the need for better quality cannon fodder. Believe me, nutrition standards were improved in the past when our soldiers were too weak and undergrown to fight in foreign wars.

What we are talking about here is just plain cruelty.

- 5Recommend

Joie2

Westchester, NY [3 days ago](#)

Do you suppose that the School Nutrition Association would object to lunches like those typically served in French schools? You can see a sample month's menu at <http://www.ville-lecres.fr/fichiers/596/menu-2011-03.pdf>. Chicken nuggets do make an appearance on March 4 and 16, but are accompanied by vegetables, fruit, and other foods. Hamburgers are a one-day wonder (March 11). I'd love to see our kids eat like this!

- 5Recommend



Concerned Citizen

Anywheresville [3 days ago](#)

Unfortunately, this is in French, which I do not speak or read. However, what I can make out, it sounds very similar to the local school lunches here -- on March 17 (this is from 2011!), the children got pizza, yogurt and fruit. On March 11, they got a hamburger and potatoes (probably frites!), cheese and fruit. On March 4, they got chicken nuggets! and fruit IN SYRUP -- i.e., canned.

Of course, it is all in the preparation -- you can have a delicious homemade hamburger of high quality meat or a nasty gray burger, sitting under hot lights, made from god knows what sort of pink slime.

- Recommend

H

B [3 days ago](#)

Too much too soon, an excuse for everything else in this country where action never comes soon enough. By delaying or eliminating healthy lunches, this could exponentially increase the number of overweight/malnourished children. So much for doing everything to keep women pregnant no matter what, are the same people there to support the children's growth?

- 5Recommend

NYT Pick

M

Minnesota [3 days ago](#)

You're all missing something really important here in the comments. You're not students. I'm a senior in high school, and I can safely say that my school was serving far higher quality food before the federal push for "healthy lunches." And I've been putting up with that for four years now. If schools want to opt out of this program, by all means they should do so. Maybe they'll start serving real food instead of low grade fruits and vegetables that are literally spoiling in the lunch line.

- 23Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

Prove it. Provide links to the menu with nutritional information before and after.

- 7Recommend

C. Baker

Chicago [3 days ago](#)

I do not see why obesity is a government issue? That should be an issue of the parents child and the Obama administration along with Michelle should focus all their attention on education. If the childrens parents want them to eat healthy then they can pack their child a lunch and keep them involved in sports. Stop wasting money.

- 6Recommend

Concerned

Chatham, NJ [3 days ago](#)

Obesity is a public health issue that affects everyone, even the thinnest of us all. Society pays for poor health.

- 10Recommend

Tired of Hypocrisy

USA [3 days ago](#)

"...the Agriculture Department would also be required to establish a waiver process for local school districts that have found it too expensive to comply with those tougher nutrition standards."

"The School Nutrition Association, a group composed of school nutritionists, praised the legislation." "The group said the rules have also led to tons of wasted food because children are not eating the healthier alternatives."

"School meal programs need more flexibility to plan healthy menus that appeal to students."

But it's all the fault of the Republicans according to many of those responding here. I'd love to have my children go to a school without metal detectors at the doors, with only five students per teacher and each teacher with a PhD. I also like them to have the latest in electronic teaching aids in a classroom that is air conditioned but the mayor, a Democrat, has said that we can't afford all that is he wrong?

- 3Recommend

Robert

Minneapolis [3 days ago](#)

This seems to be much ado about nothing. The House will do one thing, and the Senate will disagree. Even if they agreed, there would be a veto.

- 1Recommend

Skeptical parent

CT [3 days ago](#)

I wonder where the School Nutrition Association gets its funding from?

- 10Recommend

third.coast

earth [3 days ago](#)

Read the article.

[[The School Nutrition Association, a group composed of school nutritionists, praised the legislation. The group, which receives financing from several food companies that originally opposed the nutrition standards, said the cost of the new rules had led to a decrease in the number of schools participating in the federal meals programs.]]

- Recommend

Cold Liberal

Minnesota [3 days ago](#)

This is just a veiled attempt to destroy the First Lady's primary agenda of healthy eating. These people will do anything to obstruct any contribution that the Obamas have made to our country. Brought to you by the party whose thought leader supreme, Saint Ronnie, advanced the idea that catsup is a vegetable.

- 24Recommend

B.

Brooklyn [3 days ago](#)

On the other hand, many years ago when parents hastily scratched together an American cheese sandwich or peanut butter for their kids to take to school (both very, very inexpensive), students were doing well in their courses. Maybe that's because their parents made them lunch in whatever free moment they had.

The kids didn't become obese.

What parents didn't do in those days was give their kids money to eat at McDonalds.

- 6Recommend

Whippy Burgeonesque

Cremona [3 days ago](#)

B., national test scores for all groups of children have risen over the last three decades. You seem to believe in the myth that children are doing less well in school than they were in days of yore. Look up the NAEP test scores for 4th graders and 8th graders.

- 2Recommend

kmadd

Portland, Oregon [3 days ago](#)

There you have it! The same people who labeled Pizza as a vegetable now rolls back the legislation to accommodate the lobbyist...

What a joke Congress has become.

- 9Recommend

James Harlow

Santa Clarita, California [3 days ago](#)

How has it gotten to this point? Why are we feeding all these children that parents couldn't afford to create in the first place? Why aren't fathers and mothers feeding their own children? Because we are creating institutionalized welfare for these people. They were taught this message when they received their free food in high school. The real message was, and is, that you don't really need to worry about feeding them, so go ahead and create as many as you want. As long as they are in school, they will get two free meals. As an open-minded teacher with a Master's in Education at Van Nuys High School, I was shocked when I saw years of the abuse of this system. The overwhelming majority of these kids were dressed in expensive clothing and \$100 sneakers receiving free meals and throwing them on the ground. Oranges and apples were left behind on tables to rot. They didn't care. They didn't have to pay for it. And if it was healthy, they didn't want it. They weren't even forced to throw it in the the garbage can. Then, they used their own money for junk food and sodas. If they American public saw the abuse, they would be as repulsed and saddened by it as I was. How about the whole system being overhauled? Because currently, it's a disgusting mess.

- 9Recommend

Concerned

Chatham, NJ [3 days ago](#)

It would come as a great surprise to the vast majority of parents in my district to know that anyone thinks that all school children receive free lunches.

- 4Recommend

David X

new haven ct [3 days ago](#)

How do you know that they bought "junk food and sodas" with their own money? Were there vending machines in the school? If so, I wonder just how they go there?

- 7Recommend

Joan

Coronado, CA [3 days ago](#)

This should be a NYT pick. Agree 100% with your assessment.

- 2Recommend

What me worry

[3 days ago](#)

Frankly, school lunches were invented to subsidize big agriculture. The fruit served in schools would better serve as hard balls... it never ripens.

- 1Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

Republicans don't want "these people" to earn a living wage, they don't want them to have access to contraception, health care or sex education. Look how well that's turning out.

- 6Recommend

Giskander

Grosse Pointe, Mich. [3 days ago](#)

Back to tomato ketchup in subsidized school lunches, say the Republicans.

- 12Recommend



Howie Lisnoff

is a trusted commenter Massachusetts [3 days ago](#)

How disgusting! Foisting right-wing extremism against the nutritional needs of kids! Haven't we heard this before under Reagan, the "Great Communicator," when ketchup was considered a vegetable. These people are simply amazing!

- 20Recommend

G. Morris

NY and NJ [3 days ago](#)

GOP appears to be pro-obesity.

- 11Recommend

NYT Pick

jhanzel

Glenview, Illinois [3 days ago](#)

Rather than outright challenging any "Obama driven" effort why not suggest a way to improve it? Non-CPS people in Chicago were able to get real chefs to help develop real ways to get real food to kids in 15 minute lunch periods that they really liked, and at an doable price.

I really do like some Republicans and really wish that as a majority they would do something real.

- 9Recommend

GR

Texas [3 days ago](#)

Looming bills by Congress that undercut initiatives that fight against obesity appear to reflect concerns more related to the size of the slice from political and financial pies.

- 4Recommend

horseofcourse66

NY [3 days ago](#)

Such a well written article but how sad that our children's nutrition in schools is becoming a political battleground. Especially in an age when 1 in 5 children do not know where their next meal is coming from, it is unconscionable that Congress is not doing everything in its power to help children eat well.

- 7Recommend

George S

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

It only became a political battleground when the federal government decided to again butt it's nose into yet another area of American life predicated upon the "DC always knows best about everything under the sun".

- 1Recommend

DR

New England [3 days ago](#)

George S - The government gets stuck with the health problems caused by obesity, taxpayers have a right to be concerned about this issue and to demand solutions.

- 3Recommend



Brad

Seattle [3 days ago](#)

Skim milk, a banana, iceberg lettuce, and instant mashed potatoes (minus the salt)? How do you define a "healthy" meal? I certainly wouldn't want the same ill-informed bureaucracy that gave us food pyramids to set these restrictions for my child. Instead of arbitrary and unscientific restrictions, why not simply reward school districts that find their own way to serve healthier meals that kids might actually want to eat? And while they're at it, they might consult with nutritionists who don't subscribe to 1950's superstitions about fat, salt, and the mistreatment of vegetables.

- 4Recommend

David X

new haven ct [3 days ago](#)

The Food-Pharma complex is definitely behind this bit of skullduggery!

Let's see: we don't have enough money to feed our children healthy meals.

But we do have enough money to subsidize sugar, tobacco, corn.... Sorry for the break: I had to go puke.

- 11Recommend



Marcus

Charleston, SC [3 days ago](#)

No healthy habits! We need fodder for the health care system...

- 5Recommend

james jones

ny [3 days ago](#)

how can the USA stand for junk food...serve the limbic brain and not the people...come on nutrition is key...get the costs down for better nutrition and set examples for our children...

Our government is not about representing our interests, rather the interests of food producers, gun makers drug and tobacco(same thing) companies and on and on..Obama is over his head when trying to effect change in the right direction. You would have to start over with a clean slate and way of really governing!

- Recommend

Ricky

Saint Paul, MN [3 days ago](#)

Of course, the rich folks' kids will eat healthy - but who cares if poor kids eat unhealthy meals? That's what the opt-out clause really means.

- 17Recommend

Susie F

Boston [3 days ago](#)

Alabama is 5th in adult obesity and 7th in child obesity.... maybe their Representative ought to rethink his position. Or is he proud of those rankings? Maybe he's thinking, "well, at least Alabama's not last.... "

- 14Recommend

Reader In Wash, DC

Washington, DC [3 days ago](#)

No amount of legislation will keep people from over eating. That is the cause of obesity.

- 1Recommend

N. Smith

New York City [3 days ago](#)

A scary, but brilliant "faites d' accomplis" on behalf of those dedicated to listing ketchup as a "vegetable" at the expense of future generations -- and of course, these are the same guardians who pride themselves in watching the bottom line.... But, at what price????

- 4Recommend

Joan

Coronado, CA [3 days ago](#)

I wish they would have just tightened the rules allowing access to this program to benefit the needy and limit abuse. I understand there are truly needy kids whose parents' really struggle financially. I also understand there are those who breed irresponsibly, spend irresponsibly and then expect taxpayers to provide them and their kids everything. This needs to end.

- 2Recommend



Patrick

Long Island, N.Y. [3 days ago](#)

Educate,.....Don't Legislate!

I would think the teachers could find time to teach the young children good nutrition. That is after all an important practical lesson.

- 3Recommend

Lawyer/DJ

Planet Earth [3 days ago](#)

Why is it the teachers' responsibility to do that?

Why not parents?

- 4Recommend

Carol

Las Vegas [3 days ago](#)

I applaud Ms. Obama for trying to keep our children from Obesity but I think the government needs to keep out of our business on how our children should be fed. First of all she don't pay the food bill and I sure do not have

the money to pay for all those nutritious items Obama thinks our children should eat. Our schools throw more food away because the children will not eat the food the schools feed them , now we are talking about wastefulness which is also a big expense on the school. This cost us lots of money just on what we have to throw away because Our children will not eat the food the government says they have to eat because the government says our children are obese. The government need to keep out of the health care and let the doctors tell the parents and schools what our children need to eat. Another thing it is not the food our children is eating that is making them obese, it is the inactivity that our children do not get because of the internet, television, gameboy and facebook, twitter Etc. Take that stuff away from our children and they will find activity to do then you will see them loose weight. Our country never had a problem with weight or obesity before technology came along.

- 4Recommend

Jack

Illinois [3 days ago](#)

I'm sorry to say but this narrative that kids are throwing away all this "healthy" menu is nothing more than some Fox News fabrication...again. Fox News and their agents invent and make up new excuses everyday, and try to report them as if they were true.

We have reports from school cafeteria people that kids are adjusting, that it is taking some time to have them change their old eating routines. Kids are eating this new menu choice.

I make and serve plenty of "healthy " foods and have had no problems with my younger guests about what they like to eat.

- 11Recommend

DGillies

San Diego, CA [3 days ago](#)

So as a result of the new rules, the kids aren't eating as much.
And the problem with this is ... just exactly what?

- 10Recommend



Concerned Citizen

Anywheresville [3 days ago](#)

Children who don't eat a decent lunch are hungry, tired and distracted during the afternoon. And as soon as they get off the school campus, they RUN to the local bodega or Kwik Mart and buy the worst sort of junk -- candy,

soda, chips.

Also, it is not as simple as "kids not eating much" -- the food must be purchased and prepared, and the kids are **THROWING IT IN THE GARBAGE** because it is so tasteless and lousy.

- 2Recommend

Bernie

Coronado, CA [3 days ago](#)

Obesity is an epidemic plain and simple. The more we do to prevent children from becoming obese the greater we can decrease future medical costs. Diabetes is a life long illness that requires vigilance and the number of people we can prevent from becoming diabetic will truly unburden our overburdened health care system, cut costs and improve America's overall health. Every cent devoted to prevention should be valued much more highly than any dollar spent on treatment of the long term sequelae of nutritionally caused disease.

- 13Recommend

Cowboy Marine

Colorado Trails [3 days ago](#)

The biggest oxymoron of the millennium is that the GOP is "conservative." "An ounce of prevention..." no longer fits their philosophy. Science, common sense, thinking-ahead...all values now rejected by Republicans.

- 3Recommend

Stacy

Manhattan [3 days ago](#)

More from the "can't do" crowd. It's too hard, it's takes work, it would mean we would actually have to get off our butts and lead rather than pander to the "food" service companies now providing "meals." Just one big whine. And the rich getting richer at the expense of children.

- 19Recommend

cyrano

nyc nc [3 days ago](#)

Healthy food is "too expensive" because school budgets have been cut. Meanwhile, there is tons of money for argri corporations, drug companies, oil companies, hedge fund managers, military parasites, etc. The values of the right wing are clear: greed at the expense of the public good.

- 27Recommend

Jack

Illinois [3 days ago](#)

"Healthy food is too expensive, kids don't want this food, they throw it away."

This is the GOP response to healthy eating in schools. All wrong, all based on their mission to do exactly the opposite of what Americans want. We should all expect to hear more "too expensive, won't eat it" from the GOP in their continued War On Kids.

- 5Recommend

Richard Colman

Orinda, California [3 days ago](#)

The House Appropriations Committee to school children: "LET THEM EAT CAKE."

- 20Recommend

arty

is a trusted commenter ma [3 days ago](#)

Ok, while I completely agree that the Republicans are ridiculous and motivated by disgusting bias and hatred, can we please stop denigrating pizza and ketchup as the knee-jerk evil foods?

There's nothing inherently unhealthy about either item. There's nothing even unhealthy about 'french fries'; in all cases it's ingredients and preparation.

I often comment on Bittman's columns/blogs that we always get into this argument that allows no-middle-ground between HFCS-saturated pseudo-food and locally organic arugula from Whole Foods or the Farmer's Market.

Any decent home cook can make delicious and very healthy pizza-- a great way to get vegetables into the diet. Likewise, ketchup is tomato sauce for heaven's sake, and if it has a bit of (real) sugar, so what-- you think those Italian grandmothers would be too proud to add some if the tomatoes were a bit acid? And if you make french fries by baking with a tiny amount of oil, they taste even better than the hydrogenated oil version.

It's all about training the young palate, so stop worrying about the superficial character of the food; it's not the name of the thing but the quality. It would be a *good* thing to get kids to appreciate good pizza; they would then reject the trash from the trash chains.

- 9Recommend

NYT Pick

George S

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

It's sad, though not too surprising, that many commenters in here immediately make this a partisan issue, taking potshots at a dead president as if he was still in charge, and utterly believing that the only solution to every problem is yet another federal law and edict from the politicians in DC.

Long before we had these elaborate and costly programs most kids ate better because their parents - not the government - decided what they ate, included more balanced diets, didn't rely on fast food because the kids wanted it, made the children run and play and exercise. Yes, there a poor children for whom meal subsidies are a necessity, but the one size fits all DC approach, from school tests to lunches, fails time and again under its own cumbersome bureaucratic weight.

- 12Recommend

Steve

Boston [3 days ago](#)

"Long before we had these elaborate and costly programs most kids ate better because their parents - not the government - decided what they ate, included more balanced diets, didn't rely on fast food because the kids wanted it, made the children run and play and exercise."

Do you have a specific date for this golden age of uniformly effective parenting and excellent nutrition? Since when are guidelines a "one size fits all DC approach?"

- 1Recommend

ssalamone

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

Many children do not have the option of having their parents feed them properly. Harking back to the good old days simply is not a solution in this day in age. The government is the only viable way to ensure children get healthy meals.

- 4Recommend

Lawyer/DJ

Planet Earth [3 days ago](#)

Wrong. Long ago, most kids didn't eat lunch.

- 2Recommend

George S

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

The incidence of childhood obesity even twenty years ago was no where near what it is today, so somebody, somewhere - without direction from Washington - was doing something right.

As for the "guidelines", fine, if they were just that. But the fed has the habit of forcing such things by tying it to funding...do our bidding on X or we'll slash your funding on Y. That isn't guidance it's coercion at best,

- 1Recommend



HJBoitel

New York [2 days ago](#)

The school children are still free to bring their lunch from home. The issue here is not whether the school system is over-riding that option. The issue is whether the food that is served should meet basic standards of sound nutrition.

You bemoan several factors, ranging from fast food to lack of exercise -- in doing so you actually make the case for why the school diet and exercise programs are so important.

As a nation we have a high stake in the general health of our population. The fast food and junk food opponents of nutrition programs do not have an interest in our health. Their interest is their own economic interest.

If we do not start training children to eat nutritious food, then we are just reinforcing and perpetuating the unhealthy cycle of which you complain.

- Recommend

Cowboy Marine

Colorado Trails [3 days ago](#)

Shut-down the socialist Congressional cafeteria where they have their taxpayer-subsidized "luncheons." Let the lobbyists buy them three meals a day instead of just the usual two.

- 10Recommend

carla

NEW YORK [3 days ago](#)

The corporations that produce and market soy and corn derived junk food that is funneled into public schools are scared I think. They are not interested in feeding kids or helping them develop healthier eating habits. They are interested only in their bottom line. The fact that there is a House committee now pushing to undo the hard won efforts of those who do care about feeding kids well is tragic in my opinion. And shortsighted and plain

stupid. So we will pay health costs down the road. I feed kids in a school and they eat brown rice, tofu and brussels sprouts and they love it.

- 11Recommend

Jack

Illinois [3 days ago](#)

Thank you carla for your good work to feed our children while they are at school. You and your fellow workers do the very important task to provide nutrition for our precious children. I am encouraged to know that there are caring, attentive people who take care of our children while they're at school. And it must take not only patience but good cooking skill to have kids love brown rice, tofu and brussels sprouts. Thank you again!

- 3Recommend

JuliaRoseMP

Chicago [3 days ago](#)

To turn away from dealing with our toxic food culture--both in and out of schools-- just because children don't like it, or it's too difficult for the schools to implement, is negligent. This is not an optional issue. It is a preventative and necessary action that needs to be taken. It would be like providing tainted water to children in school... that is not something we would accept, nor is it something that can be tolerated, regardless of how difficult it is to change.

- 5Recommend



Concerned Citizen

Anywheresville [3 days ago](#)

How do you propose forcing children to eat food that they hate? Especially children over age 10, who have money and access to Kwik Marts and bodegas to buy food after they leave school -- in high school, this is around 1PM!

- 1Recommend

JuliaRoseMP

Chicago [3 days ago](#)

No force necessary. Just provide only healthy-and delicious-options, and slowly the change will take place.

- 1Recommend



Jack McHenry

Charlotte, NC [3 days ago](#)

Midterm elections are coming up. These guys must be pretty confident that their electoral base agrees with their priorities. Don't you know it's illegal to be caught poor in the United States?

- 12Recommend

pkbormes

Brookline, Mass. [3 days ago](#)

Those who would deprive kids of nutritious foods are simply cruel. Immoral and cruel. They would never advocate lower food standards for their own kids, who in most cases, are attending posh private schools.

- 12Recommend

RMAN

Boston [3 days ago](#)

Having seen and tasted what my children are offered at school cafeterias I would submit that (much of) the problem resides with a lack of creativity and preparation skills. What is supposed to pass for a nutritious meal is often tasteless and looks like two-day old leftovers. Why? Because they're just kids, right, and they can't fight back on this issue.

So, as if often the case with our uber-wealthy and out-of-touch House members, who eat quite well and pay next to nothing for it, they will just do the easy thing and consign our children to an even worse fate - worse food and even worse preparation. After all, they don't vote.

- 7Recommend

Arthur Schweke

Chicago [3 days ago](#)

For kids to eat healthy, the habit begins at home. Good choices cannot be regulated. This program is expensive and will fail. The nanny state lives.

- 8Recommend

Lawyer/DJ

Planet Earth [3 days ago](#)

Good grief. This is the 21st Century Conservative attitude: Providing healthy school lunches = nanny state.

Thank goodness national demographics will cause people like this to go the way of the dodo very shortly.

- 11Recommend

Whippy Burgeonesque

Cremona [3 days ago](#)

There is no reason why a kid who is eating unhealthily at home can't eat healthy meals at school. Maybe for that kid the health habit WILL begin at school. Why would you have a defeatist attitude that says kids can't change from an unhealthy habit to a healthy one? Give them a healthy alternative once a day.

- 3Recommend

Mark Bomchill

Minneapolis [3 days ago](#)

This should be decided on a local level by an elected school board

- 7Recommend

JRG

Montclair [3 days ago](#)

When the new regs were announced, I attended a USDA training with 149 food service managers; I was the sole dietitian. I applauded the stricter guidelines that aimed to boost fresh fruits and vegetables, while the majority of those around me lamented that they couldn't possibly fill up their students if they complied with the rules. I have designed 8 weeks of appetizing, ethnically diverse and nutritionally appropriate meals that are consumed by children ages 6 to 18. It can be done. So These House naysayers who want to turn the clock backwards on school lunches are the same "leaders" who think we were fine without requiring seat belts, or health insurance (except for themselves), or protection from cigarette smoke. Let kids eat whatever they want, then blame poor parenting for the resulting obesity. That's a credible political plan--Not!

- 19Recommend

George S

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

And nothing stops those districts from implementing and adopting the menus you rightly favor. They aren't forced to serve bad food or have soda and vending machines in their schools. I wore seat belts (to use one of your examples) long before it became the law in most places because it made sense and was a responsible thing to do. But why must it all be guided for us from across the Potomac? That is the issue.

- 1Recommend



Christine Mcmorrow

Waltham, Massachusetts [3 days ago](#)

"Under the legislation passed on Thursday, the Agriculture Department must establish a waiver process for local school districts that have found it too expensive to comply with those tougher nutrition standards."

And guess where many of these school districts are located? In the rural big Ag states controlled by Republicans who have used any excuse they can, locally and regionally, to cut school funding.

Republican philosophy: cut funding to schools or (fill in the blank) but then offer them a "deus ex machina" opt out provision to avoid complying with any mandate that offends Republican corporate sponsors, in this case, Big Food.

- 16Recommend

Richard Navas

is a trusted commenter Bellingham, WA [3 days ago](#)

Will the Students retain the right to later sue the districts that opted out and served food that promoted obesity? Also, will the states who allow opting out be required to foot the bill for added health costs? I sure hope this isn't one of those scams where they save a few nickles, but the rest of us end up paying tons of money for the health problems those students have later in life. I'm getting tired of my tax money going to fix self inflicted problems in GOP states.

- 13Recommend

George S

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

Sue? This is the only chance in their entire lives to be healthy? No parental or personal responsibility, no good dietary choices, no exercise or healthy lifestyle decisions...no, no, their only salvation is a bureaucratic answer from Washington? You must be kidding.

- 5Recommend



Concerned Citizen

Anywheresville [3 days ago](#)

But no district force feeds children anything. All children have the right to come to school with a packed lunch from home. Even in the school cafeteria, there is always milk, peanut butter sandwiches, fruit, salad. Nobody is forcing children to choose soda, chips, french fries and pizza.

It is also only 5 meals a week, at the maximum (many school weeks are LESS than 5 days!) -- out of 21 meals that the child eats. In the long run, even if the food is not ideal at school, it is of less importance than what the child eats at home.

- 5Recommend

SW

is a trusted commenter San Francisco [3 days ago](#)

@Concerned: don't you know that NYT readers never, ever want to address the issue of personal responsibility. Yes, by all means, school districts should have salad bars and unprocessed foods. If the kids won't eat it, so be it. Let their parents deal with their hunger at home.

- Recommend

Howard G

New York [3 days ago](#)

Remember this...?

Did President Ronald Reagan really say that ketchup is a vegetable ?

"The ketchup is a vegetable controversy refers to proposed United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regulations, early in the presidency of Ronald Reagan, that intended to provide more flexibility in meal planning to local school lunch administrators coping with National School Lunch Plan subsidy cuts enacted by the Omnibus Regulation Acts of 1980 and 1981.

The regulations allowed administrators the opportunity to credit items not explicitly listed that met nutritional requirements. While ketchup was not mentioned in the original regulations, pickle relish was used as an example of an item that could count as a vegetable."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ketchup_as_a_vegetable

- 4Recommend

George S

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

And the point of these continual references to something that happened three decades ago is what, exactly? How does it help us address the issues we are discussing today! It doesn't, of course, it's just pointless politics.

- 3Recommend



Tom Brucia

Houston, Texas [3 days ago](#)

I am very happy my grandsons live in Japan and are safe from the insanity of feeding them bad food because it is cheap.

- 9Recommend

Jim ALLEN

Charlotte, NC [3 days ago](#)

Obamas school lunch reqs unfortunately do not take into consideration the culturally diverse populations many of our schools have. Muslim children have much different cultural dietary requirements than Native Americans or Mexican Americans. Schools & local officials need to do a better assuring cultural dietary needs are met. Ms Obamas "one size fits all" is not well thoughtout and does not address food diversity!

- 4Recommend

Whippy Burgeonesque

Cremona [3 days ago](#)

Jim, your comment doesn't make a lot of sense. Muslims, Native Americans, and Mexicans can't eat fresh vegetables and salads?

- 10Recommend

SW

is a trusted commenter San Francisco [3 days ago](#)

@Jim, since my home state now sees Hispanics as the largest racial group, and my adult children went to school here, I'm going to go out on a limb and say that Mexican Americans do not have different dietary "needs". I'm also not in favor of the government imposing fiats that school districts conform to the dietary needs of religious groups. Let parents make halal, kosher, etc. food and send it to school with their children if that's an issue. You're asking too much of schools.

- 1Recommend

jb

binghamton ny [3 days ago](#)

We have a huge problem finding a place for our discarded food. Grind it all up and feed it to Americas kids. Recycling and nutrition all in one. What's not to like. After all, they're just kids and the districts that can't afford better are probably not in really good neighborhoods anyway.

- 2Recommend

Michael

Boston [3 days ago](#)

Most school lunch programs have been terrible for decades, my own elementary experience 35 years ago featured completely inedible prison-grade slop reheated from a bag...and this was in the middle of farm country. Districts where hard working dieticians and skilled cooks work in concert with real ingredients nutrition is achievable within existing budget, but it takes hard work and no profit-margin for food service corporations!

- 5Recommend

Katherine Garrison

Salem, Or [3 days ago](#)

The food served in school cafeterias is processed, fried, frozen junk that looks more like dog food. Maybe if the school were actually making meals from scratch the students wouldn't be wasting the food but eating it instead.

- 4Recommend

WestSider

NYC [3 days ago](#)

House members who vote for 4 billion a year for 'special allies' must consider these poor kids their enemies.

- 4Recommend

Mary Ann

Western Washington [3 days ago](#)

I looked at the School Nutrition Association website and saw an ad for Pizza Hut.

According to one of their press releases, they are more concerned by the cost of school lunches than the nutritional value.

<http://www.schoolnutrition.org/Blog2.aspx?id=20479&blogid=564>

- 2Recommend

PogoWasRight

Melbourne Florida [3 days ago](#)

Might as well make it "legal". There is not a kid alive who would opt for nutritious over tasty and fat-filled. Nor many adults, for that matter.....

- 1Recommend



John LeBaron

MA [3 days ago](#)

Just when you've seen what you thought was the full brunt of madness from today's House of Representatives, it follows-up with another "initiative" so short-sighted, mean-spirited and stupid that the jaw hits the floor so hard as to risk serious personal injury. Unbelievable!

Such obtuseness is exacerbated by the fact that federal school nutrition standards are showing signs of working, with child obesity rates falling smartly.

This is what we get when we elect a H of R that measures success by the degree to which it can spite any and all things attributable to the name "Obama," even if the program works; even if it's proving to make America's children healthier.

Just unbelievable!

www.endthemandnessnow.org

- 5Recommend



Leisureguy

Monterey CA [3 days ago](#)

Reducing the carbohydrates makes more sense, but carbohydrates are cheap so there's probably pressure to use those as much as possible.

Children don't vote or make campaign contributions, so many in Congress don't care about them. They may love their own children and feel protective toward them, but other people's kids? Clearly most in Congress really don't give a damn.

- 3Recommend

islandmommy

Staten Island, NY [3 days ago](#)

That's a big part of the problem-- they've increased carbs in the form of fruit while reducing fat, which second to protein is very filling and makes foods (like veggies and meat) taste better. And by reducing bread/ potato carbs they've made the meals unpalatable to most children. If they had instead simply eliminated sugar (syrup-immersed fruit cups are still allowed) and increased the healthy fat content the foods would probably be more appetizing and filling than what they have become.

An incredibly creative cook could probably work within these parameters for a decent meal, but let's face it, most lunch ladies are not creative geniuses. It takes a unique chef to mass produce foods that are healthful and tasty, but those unique chefs aren't going to be working in school cafeterias.

In the meantime kids are throwing away most of the food and remain hungry and inattentive.

- Recommend

Frank Jasko

Palm Springs, Ca. [3 days ago](#)

Yesss, more diabetes and obesity...GOP endorses fat and sugar-staples of the all American diet! I need a cigarette!

- 5Recommend



Jf

Mars [3 days ago](#)

I cannot believe that our elected officials would be okay with giving our children junk food. How sad. Please come out and vote to get all these hypocrites out. They do not represent us and our interests. They represent corporations and big money.

- 4Recommend

cleehill

Maine, USA [3 days ago](#)

Maybe some of our billionaires would like to help cash-strapped school districts provide good nutrition for the kiddies, making it somewhat more likely they will grow into healthy adults without junk food.

- Recommend

Joan

Coronado, CA [3 days ago](#)

Mark Zuckerberg donated millions to the Newark school district. 100 million, I believe. All of the money was spent on hiring consultants to help improve the schools and on union contracts. Public schools do not deserve more money. They need to learn how to manage the money they have.

- 7Recommend

O'Brien

Airstrip One [3 days ago](#)

Let them drink soylent. Cheap, easy, fully nutritious, requires no staff to prepare, and if served in small cups, there will be no waste. Serve it for school breakfast and lunch both. Make it available to every kid, regardless of income status. It's cheap enough to do that. What's not to like?

- 2Recommend

Anna

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

What exactly are these healthy menus anyway? Most kids don't care for a salad bar.. What about the cooked foods? I want to see menus...

- 1Recommend

HT

is a trusted commenter Ohio [3 days ago](#)

Many school districts are now putting their lunch menus online. Here's a link to NYC schools lunch menu.

<http://www.schoolfoodnyc.org/schoolfood/MenusDailyDisplay.aspx>

- Recommend

Julie R

Washington [3 days ago](#)

My mother in law was the head cook of a school system and a nearby air force base school. She and her staff of five cooked everything from scratch, bread, real mashed potatoes, veggies, fresh chicken, she even made her on pizzas. She used to tell us how she opened the air vents so the smell of her food would fill the schools. She was proud that all the kids ate most of what was on their plates. Now, kids get pink slim frozen chicken nuggets and factory mac & cheese. Nobody seems to be able to look beyond their nose or wallet these days. Penny wise, pound foolish.

- 7Recommend

borntorun45

NY [3 days ago](#)

I wonder if the problem in some school districts is a lack of imagination in serving the recommended food. Presentation plays a huge part in serving healthy, palatable food to kids, and I highly recommend the art of subtle disguise to prevent instant dislike. There are a couple of great cookbooks out there describing "deceptively delicious" recipes in which you can hide such things as cauliflower and sweet potatoes in simple macaroni and cheese, changing a decadent childhood favorite into a much more healthy dish - my kids love the stuff. I would encourage school district dieticians to explore a similar route to solving the conundrum - but please, don't give up on the nutrition guildlines as established. Our childrens' lives depend upon it.

- 4Recommend



Loyd Eskildson

is a trusted commenter Phoenix, AZ. [3 days ago](#)

Glad we're giving this important topic the priority it deserves, vs. a flailing economy, soaring national debt, a \$10+ trillion and rising cumulative trade deficit etc. Good work, Congress!

- 3Recommend

JenD

NJ [3 days ago](#)

"But the bottom line is that schools are finding it's too much, too quick." Are you SERIOUS? That is the lamest, most made-up excuse possible. Is there no end to Republican stupidity?

- 4Recommend

Ignatz Farquad

New York, NY [3 days ago](#)

The fatter and dumber the better. Keep voting Republican!

- 4Recommend

SharkMD

Miami, FL [3 days ago](#)

Truly a mind-blowing piece of legislation. The food environment for children has never been more toxic. For many children, these school lunches may be the only healthy meal they receive all day. Remember, the current prevalence of diabetes and obesity in both children and adults are proof positive of what happens when you give people, schools, and corporations free reign on society. Something has to change...and the improved school lunches was a step in the right direction! Shame on all who voted for this.

- 2Recommend



Mor

California [3 days ago](#)

I want to address two points made by conservatives in this discussion. First, children won't eat healthy food because it is not tasty. This only shows the unbelievable corruption of taste wrought upon the American palate by the junk food industry. Most junk food is not just unhealthy - it is inedible. When my kids were small, they would choose Mediterranean style cooked vegetables and legumes or Chinese food over commercial pizza any time. Now grown up and conscious of the dangers and ugliness of obesity, they are even more careful. Eating fruits and vegetables is not a punishment but one of the greatest pleasures in life. Second, the idea that one size does not fit all. True but where do you have more choice: in the incredible diversity of vegetables or in the commercially produced junk, which is corn syrup and carbs under different names? Americans are eating themselves into becoming the laughing-stock of the world and now we are drugging our children along.

- 5Recommend

MIMA

heartsny [3 days ago](#)

Whatever happened to "eat what's in front of you?"

When my mother used to say "and people across the world are starving" I thought she was just manipulating. Well, truth is "people across the world are starving" and kids in the US are throwing good food out. The leaders of the country are kowtowing to it. What are they going to put on the table instead of healthy food? Candy bars, potato chips, cans of high energy soda? After all, the kids might gobble that stuff down. This is ridiculous.

- 7Recommend

Nick Mitchell

Ceres, CA [3 days ago](#)

As a high school student, I'm on the front line of these new "nutrition standards." They're highly unpopular and students are starting to stop buying school lunches because the new healthy food is just simply not tasty.

These nutrition standards are also ruining school traditions. This school year (which ends next week) will be the last school year that my school has food court. Food court, which occurred every quarter, was where clubs would sell local restaurant, including fast food, food for a profit so the clubs could continue to be able to afford to give students the high school experience. For example, the two clubs that I am involved in: Newspaper and California Scholarship Federation sold McDonalds or Root Beer Floats. Both clubs would make around \$450 each time or about \$1800 a year. We will now have to figure out how to make that money without food court.

While I understand the need to combat obesity, I feel that we are doing more damage than good. My school charges about \$3.30 per lunch which quickly adds up. It's more economically sensible for me just to go home and eat what I have at home (which is usually not the most healthy things) then pay for a meal that I will only eat part of. In the end, I'm eating food that is worse then the school food that I use to eat (which usually was pizza until it was taken off the menu for all days except one due to new food standards, according to the Director of Nutrition at my school district).

- 4Recommend



PE

Seattle [3 days ago](#)

Here is how my son just described his school lunches: "Our school lunches are utterly disgusting, worse than McDonald's--pizza with rubber cheese, fried grease chicken nuggets, hard bread hamburgers, stale meat, everything is really gross." My daughter describes it like this: "It's gross because there is mold in the mac n cheese, and the cheese is fake, the food is outdated--instead of fruit, it's watery fruit in a plastic thing."

We started packing lunches a long time ago. But what if my kids relied on this everyday for 5 years of

elementary school?

Schools need to lead by setting the example. They can't teach health and then serve the opposite. Our leader should fund healthy lunches. Let's get our priorities straight.

- 2Recommend

Baetoven

NJ [3 days ago](#)

Seriously how hard is a healthy menu change to execute? The congressmen who allowed for a 12 month delay have shown themselves to be complete idiots or people who like to keep the status quo of keeping inept administrators working in the school system.

The school system will never get better until inept people are removed from office.

- 2Recommend

Eddie

Lew [3 days ago](#)

I guess the Republicans want unhealthy children because it does not cut into the profits margin of their constituents, corporations. Only in America.

- 4Recommend

Whippy Burgeonesque

Cremona [3 days ago](#)

You know if Ronald Reagan had suggested this instead of Michelle Obama, House Republicans would be all for it.

We know why the House is proposing this, and it has nothing to do with cost.

- 7Recommend

DocMorgan

Northern California [3 days ago](#)

School lunches were healthy for a very long time. Junk food and drinks were not available. Cooks were competent to produce what met nutritional needs and the congresspersons who now wish to keep us on the unhealthy path are beyond the pale. Train or replace the cooks and do the right thing. Replace the congresspersons who are clearly part of the problem.

- 4Recommend

Whippy Burgeonesque

Cremona [3 days ago](#)

When I was a kid in Maryland public schools in the 70s I would have loved to have that healthy salad bar in the photo. Our food was so grotesque. I don't even want to describe the pizza squares...I don't remember getting a fresh salad at public school, ever.

- 5Recommend

Shilee Meadows

San Diego Ca. [3 days ago](#)

The cost now will be a lot cheaper than the cost later of all the medical problem that will occur. And what will be the cost of a child's medical bills who is an obese diabetic at the age of 7? What price do you place on a child's terrible health?

These republicans seem to always take the side of Big Business and corporations over the welfare of the American people. And now they are against the cost of healthy food for our children. Are they only about the money?

- 5Recommend

Kathryn Tominey

Benton City, Wa [2 days ago](#)

Vote them out and support good candidates even if you cannot vote for them. In Washington DC - how politicians from other states or congressional districts vote matters to everyone.

- Recommend

Whippy Burgeonesque

Cremona [3 days ago](#)

It was different back in the 70s. I didn't have any money on me as a public school student. Even if I had, there weren't vending machines in the school to buy junk food or sodas from. Whatever was served for lunch was what you ate, unless you had brought a lunch. If you chose to throw out the food instead of eating it, you went hungry for the rest of the day. So I ate what was put on my tray by the lunch lady. (There weren't options - there was one meal for everyone.) And the chocolate milk was really good...

- 8Recommend

Kathryn Tominey

Benton City, Wa [2 days ago](#)

True in the 50's as well.

- 1Recommend

Scientist

New York [3 days ago](#)

It was Congress that directed the Centers for Disease Control to undertake a study with the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science to review and make recommendations about appropriate nutritional standards for the availability, sale, content and consumption of foods at school, with attention to competitive foods. The ensuing report (2007)--Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way toward Healthier Youth--concluded that "federally-reimbursable school nutrition programs should be the main source of nutrition at school; opportunities for competitive foods should be limited; and, if competitive foods are available, they should consist of nutritious fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nonfat or low-fat milk and dairy products, as consistent with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA)." The report is free to download: <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2007/Nutrition-Standards-for-Foods-in-Schools...>

The guidelines did not originate with Michelle Obama--she is simply publicizing the recommendations so they will reach a wider audience. The majority of schools have met the standards and the claims of the School Nutrition Association should not be accepted uncritically, nor do its members possess the medical expertise of the authors of the report. There is no justifiable excuse to delay evidence-based medical guidelines in the best interest of children.

- 10Recommend

v.hodge122191

iowa [3 days ago](#)

Kids have been throwing out their school lunches for decades because institutional food is quite gross especially when it incorporates various overly processed substances as a short cut to real food. Combine that with the fact that children today are used to fast food and highly processed foods that save parents time and you have a real problem. Children's palates find fresh healthy food foreign and disgusting. What if:

1. Fresh healthy foods were introduced in small doses right in the classroom? Tasting red peppers could be used as a vocabulary tool by asking students to make lists of words describing the flavors. Or sampling an ethnic dish tied to studying a particular country or culture as is sometimes done now. But make this at least a weekly activity in the class.
2. Schools could offer food vouchers for fresh produce at local grocers or farmer's markets to increase it's use in the home.
3. Revamp school kitchens to produce flavorful, from scratch meals. Many are only equipped to prepare ready made foods.
4. Some schools may be able to partially engage students in growing fresh foods that would be used in school kitchens or even operate their own farms.

I am sure there are many other ideas. The point is that kids need to be introduced to fresh foods if they are not

already a part of their diet. And maybe we need to look at increasing food stamps instead of decreasing food stamps. Maybe more can be done to educate parents who control diets at home.

- 5Recommend

Michael

Denver [3 days ago](#)

Once again, Congress does not know how to do the RIGHT thing!!

- 1Recommend

Frank Greathouse

Fort Myers fl [3 days ago](#)

Mr. and Mrs. Obama, please veto or target in other ways this bad legislation from the G.O.P. That re-Instates the good old boy networks of big sugar, big Ag and big food processors at the cost of the health of America's next generation. Like the horror stories about Obamacare that have all been de-bunked, most of these objections are manufactured, rather than real. Healthy food doesn't cost more, and it can be sourced locally if the system attempts it. Waste has always been a problem. And most cafeteria cooks aren't very good at it. Changing will mean different suppliers and delivery systems will hurt entrenched companies, but the health of our next generation demands it.

- 3Recommend

Kathryn Tominey

Benton City, Wa [2 days ago](#)

More school yard gardens planted, cared for and consumed by students. Planters work even in urban areas.

- 2Recommend

ladyonthesoapbox

New York [3 days ago](#)

Mothers are the ones held accountable for their childrens' health and eating habits as they are the ones who do the food shopping and cooking.

If men were responsible for their childrens' health, they would support healthy food.

We need more women in Congress!

- 6Recommend

Emily P

Charlotte, NC [3 days ago](#)

We got men on the moon, but we can't get good food on kids' plates, REALLY?

- 5Recommend

Bakhuizen

New York [3 days ago](#)

It is not that the schools do not want to serve healthy and nutritional lunches, but the fact the cost is much higher than is reimbursed by the state and very labor intensive. If parents don't mind spending \$4-5 for school lunch - it would work. The cost of lunch is controlled by the state and does not always cover food and labor costs (remember this also includes workers healthcare and benefits). If school cafeterias were run as a business, many would be bankrupt.

- 3Recommend

Kathryn Tominey

Benton City, Wa [2 days ago](#)

So school levies need to be passed to cover lunches. Some how in the 50's the little rural school I attended managed to serve - made from scratch meat loaf (including some with no onions for picky eaters), real baked or boiled potatoes, harvard beets, green beans, salads, three bean salads, little 1/2 cup ice cream or an apple. Really simple - if you didn't eat you went hungry.

Or we packed a sandwich is we did not like the menu.

- 3Recommend

Steve Shackley

Albuquerque, NM [2 days ago](#)

Again the question is: "Who do the Republicans represent"? Seems it isn't children, or veterans, or the Middle Class, or the poor, or...

Why Americans keep voting against their own interests is beyond belief.

- 6Recommend

Kathryn Tominey

Benton City, Wa [2 days ago](#)

Follow the money coupled with too many idiot parents suffering severe displacement behavior patterns.

By that, I mean parents with anxieties about other issues they feel they cannot influence who become obsessed with completely irrelevant issues on which to focus.

If your child complains about carrot or celery sticks with lunch or fresh grapes or whole grain flour tortillas - tell them you paid good money and by golly they're to eat up.

Start serving whole grain tortillas at home or fresh carrot sticks.

- Recommend

David X

new haven ct [2 days ago](#)

"The School Nutrition Association, a group composed of school nutritionists, praised the legislation. The group, which receives financing from several food companies that originally opposed the nutrition standards....

SCUMMY MONEY, or at least it sure smells like it.

How about some details. What food companies? What political contributions to whom? What lobbies?

- 4Recommend