

July 13, 2010

The Honorable George Miller
Chairman, House Committee on
Education and Labor
2181 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Kline
Ranking Member, House Committee on
Education and Labor
2101 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Ranking Member Kline:

We are writing to express our support for H.R. 5504, the Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act. This bill would reauthorize two federal programs the ADA has long supported: the National School Lunch Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (the WIC program).

Specifically, we urge you to retain sections 204, 205, and 231 in your report of this bill, and ask that you also consider supporting section 241 of the Senate companion, S. 3307:

National School Lunch Program. Carbonated soft drinks are the leading source of added sugar among children and teens. These sugar-filled beverages have long been known to promote tooth decay: the single most common chronic childhood disease—five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever. They are also being associated with higher rates of childhood obesity and some chronic health conditions, such as diabetes and osteoporosis.

Section 205 of H.R. 5504 would help curb youth soft drink consumption by requiring local educational agencies participating in the National School Lunch Program to establish and maintain local wellness policies that promote healthy school foods and healthy eating behaviors. Section 204 would also require U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish science-based nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold in schools, including those sold outside the school cafeteria (i.e., vending machines, school stores, a la carte, etc). We urge you to retain these sections in your report of H.R. 5504.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Devastating decay in primary (baby) teeth is a well-known threat to the oral health of infants and toddlers, many of whom are eligible for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education under the WIC program. It is caused through prolonged contact with almost any liquid other than water. This can happen by putting an infant to bed with a bottle of formula, milk, juice or any beverage containing sugar, or allowing them to suck on a bottle or breastfeed for longer than a single mealtime, either when awake or asleep.

Section 231 of H.R. 5504 would help prevent early childhood tooth decay by requiring the WIC program to enhance breastfeeding education and promote exemplary breastfeeding support practices. Please retain this section in your report of H.R. 5504.

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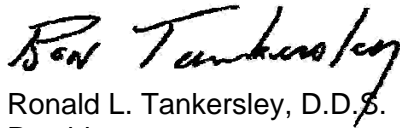
Page 2

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. We agree with many in the public health community who believe allowing the purchase of carbonated soft drinks is not consistent with the nutrition-related goals of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Incentives to purchase healthy foods should be built into the program and its nutrition education components should be enhanced.

We also ask that you consider supporting section 241 of the Senate companion bill, S. 3307. That provision would establish a grant program for states to provide nutrition education and obesity prevention services to individuals participating in the SNAP program.

We would welcome the opportunity to explore how the ADA can help ensure these provisions are retained or incorporated in your markup of H.R. 5504. Please contact Ms. Jennifer Fisher if you have any questions or would like additional information. Jennifer can be reached at 202-789-5160, or fisherj@ada.org.

Sincerely,



Ronald L. Tankersley, D.D.S.
President



Kathleen T. O'Loughlin, D.M.D., M.P.H.
Executive Director

RLT:KTO:rjb

cc: Rep. John Spratt, Jr., Chairman, House Committee on the Budget
Rep. Paul Ryan, Ranking Member, House Committee on the Budget