

Braley Introduces Bill to Improve School Nutrition for Children

Today, Rep. Braley introduced the Healthy Food Choices for Kids Act, which will help children make better decisions for school lunches.

Washington, DC - Rep. Bruce Braley (D-Iowa) today introduced the Healthy Food Choices for Kids Act, a bill designed to improve nutrition in schools by posting nutrition information, developing nutrition information awareness programs, and consulting with school nutrition experts to provide guidance on schools' nutrition programs.

The proposal takes a multi-layered approach to improving children's nutrition by both teaching children to make healthy food choices and improving the nutrition of food available at school cafeterias.

"Teaching children good nutrition is a healthcare reform issue," Braley said. "The rates of childhood obesity, diabetes, and other nutrition-related problems are disturbingly high. Obesity can lead to major health problems later in life.

"Healthy eating habits can last a lifetime if learned early. Not only can children grow up to live happier, healthier lives, but a healthier population will help lower the rates of chronic illnesses and decrease healthcare costs."

Braley's bill would create a voluntary pilot program at 100 American schools-ten schools in ten different states-that agree to meet three specific requirements:

- **Nutritional Information:** Participating schools will post nutritional information, including caloric information, for each food item served in their school cafeteria.
- **Nutritional Awareness Education:** Participating schools will develop and implement a nutritional awareness education program to teach children healthy eating habits both in and out of school.
- **Consultation with School Nutrition Experts:** Participating schools will consult with a licensed nutritionist, dietitian, or school nutrition specialist at least once per year to obtain consultation on the school's labeling requirements, the nutritional awareness program, and other nutritional matters.

Under the Healthy Food Choices for Families Act, the US Department of Agriculture would award grants to schools participating in the pilot program. The bill also requires the Agriculture Secretary to report to Congress every two years on the progress of the pilot program.

Health and wellness organizations that have endorsed Braley's bill include the American Heart Association, the National Education Association, the American Dietetic Association, the National Association of School Nurses, the Center for Science in the Public Interest, and the Easter Seals.