



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

September 14, 2010

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Boehner
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader Boehner:

I am writing to ask you to pass H.R. 5504, the Improving Nutrition for America's Children Act – and further ask you to resolve the differences between H.R. 5504 and S. 3307 in conference committee.

I believe H.R. 5504 will be more effective at improving the health and welfare of our nation's children, including the more than one million students in New York City public schools. The advantage of H.R. 5504 is that it does not rely on cuts to future Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to make nutritious and affordable meals available to children at school. As you know, the food stamp program helps to keep millions of families from growing hungry. By proposing to reduce SNAP benefits, S. 3307 would reduce the availability of nutritious food at children's homes in order provide those very same children nutritious options at school. This is not an effective overall strategy for reducing hunger or improving accessibility to healthy food for needy Americans. I do understand that H.R. 5504 must be offset, but I urge you not to take the Senate's lead in using future SNAP benefits.

H.R. 5504 will also be more effective because it allows for the use of Medicaid data to certify eligible students directly, bypassing the difficult paper application process required by the Senate bill. This will result in many more children receiving free meals. Likewise, as opposed to S. 3307, which establishes a pilot program for only a limited number of states, H.R. 5504 will create a nationwide phase-in program, the efficiency of which will help a greater percentage of eligible children register for school meals.

Passage of H.R. 5504 is an important first step in safeguarding the health of America's children, and we look forward to working with you to produce a bill that will promote healthier school environments for New York City and the rest of the nation. Thank you for your consideration of this critically important matter.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

cc: New York Congressional Delegation