

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 8, 2022

The Honorable Eric Adams
Mayor
The City of New York
Tweed Courthouse
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Dear Mayor Adams:

We write to share our concern with the potential elimination of flavored milk in New York City schools.

Over two-thirds of milk served in school is flavored, which represents an essential way that kids get the nutrients they need for healthy growth and development. Research finds that children who drink flavored milk consume more nutrients of concern like calcium, vitamin D, and potassium compared to non-flavored milk drinkers.¹ Further, leading health groups like the American Academy of Pediatrics², the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics³, the School Nutrition Association, and the American Heart Association⁴ also acknowledge the important role that flavored milk plays in ensuring kids get the three cups of milk and milk products recommended by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Studies have shown that reducing or eliminating the availability of flavored milk in schools has led to overall decreased milk consumption and increased food waste. In fact, a study of Oregon schools by Cornell found total daily milk sales declined by 9.9% when flavored milk was removed from the cafeteria and was associated with 6.8% fewer students eating lunch.⁵ When

¹ Mary M. Murphy, Judith S. Douglas, Rachel K. Johnson, Lisa A. Spence, "Drinking flavored or plain milk is positively associated with nutrient intake and is not associated with adverse effects on weight status in US children and adolescents," *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 108, no. 4 (April 2008): 631-639, doi: 10.1016/j.jada.2007.01.004

² Natalie D. Muth, William H. Dietz, Sheela N. Magge, Rachel K. Johnson, American Academy of Pediatrics, "Public Policies to Reduce Sugary Drink Consumption in Children and Adolescent," *Pediatrics* 143, no. 4 (April 2019): doi: 10.1542/peds.2019-0282.

³ Cindy Fitch, Kathryn S. Keim, "Position of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics: use of nutritive and nonnutritive sweeteners," *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 112, no. 5 (May 2012): 739-58 doi: 10.1016/j.jand.2012.03.009

⁴ Rachel K. Johnson, Lawrence J. Appel, Michael Brands, Barbara V. Howard, Michael Lefevre, Robert H. Lustig, Frank Sacks, Lyn M. Steffen, Judith Wylie-Rosett, "Dietary sugars intake and cardiovascular health: a scientific statement from the American Heart Association," *Circulation* 120, no. 11 (August 2009): 1011-1020, doi: 10.1161/CIRCULATIONAHA.109.192627.

⁵ Hanks, Andrew et. al. Chocolate Milk Consequences: A Pilot Study Evaluating the Consequences of Banning Chocolate Milk in School Cafeterias. *Plos | One*. 2014.

<https://journal.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0091022>.

flavored milk was returned to the Los Angeles Unified School District after a five-year ban, there was a 78% reduction in milk waste.⁶ In addition, there was an increase in the number of school lunches served. Studies have also shown that flavored milk consumption is not associated with weight gain or even a higher total daily sugar intake in children.^{7,8,9}

Further, most flavored milks contain less sugar than the cap recommended by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM).¹⁰ Specifically, NASEM recommends that flavored milk have no more than 22 grams of total sugar per eight-ounce serving. Lactose is the source of roughly 12 grams of sugar in milk, and as of August 2016, the Milk Processor Education Program estimated the average amount of added sugar in flavor milk to be roughly 7.5 grams, for a total of less than 20 grams of sugar.

As Members representing both rural and urban communities, we are committed to supporting the dairy farmers, producers, and agriculture partners across New York, while also ensuring that children in NYC schools have access to critical, life-enhancing nutrients. Unfortunately, for many NYC families, the meals children receive in schools are their only source of many recommended nutrients.

Members of Congress from New York and across the country support expanded access to flavored milk in schools. The bipartisan School Milk Nutrition Act (H.R. 4635) and Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act (H.R. 1861) would both expand flavored milk options in school lunchrooms and have received support from members of the New York Congressional delegation on both sides of the aisle.

We strongly urge you to continue offering children the choice of flavored milk each and every day in New York City schools. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress

⁶ Los Angeles Unified School District. L.A. Unified Seeks to Reduce Waste via Pilot Programs Addressing Milk Waste. 2016. <https://home.lausd.net/apps/news/article/625445>

⁷ Murray, R., & Bhatia, J. J. S. (2015). Snacks, Sweetened Beverages, Added Sugars, and Schools. *American Academy of Pediatrics*, 135 (1098), 578-579. Doi: 10.1542/peds.2014-3902

⁸ Johnson RK, Frary C, Wang MQ. The nutritional consequences of flavored-milk consumption by school-aged children and adolescents in the United States. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2002;102(6):853-856

⁹ Murphy MM, Douglass JS, Johnson RK, Spence LA. Drinking flavored or plain milk is positively associated with nutrient intake and is not associated with adverse effects on weight status in US children and adolescents. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2008; 108(4):631-639

¹⁰ Institute of Medicine. *Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: Leading the Way Toward Healthier Youth.* 2007.



Elise M. Stefanik
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
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John Katko
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Member of Congress



Chris Jacobs
Member of Congress



Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



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CC: Commissioner Betty A. Rosa, New York State Education Department