

LATE TESTIMONY

Date: 03/25/2009

Committee: House Education
House Health

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Resolution: HR 047(HCR 59) REQUESTING THE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A POLICY TO INCLUDE VEGETARIAN AND VEGAN MEAL OPTIONS IN ALL SCHOOL MENU PLANS.

Purpose of Resolution:

Department's Position: The Department of Education does not believe this measure is necessary. DOE meal service, under the USDA National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, exceeds nutrition guidelines outlined by Child Nutrition standards. Financial resources are used to improve and meet benchmarks outlined by the DOE Wellness Policy. These limited fiscal resources are utilized to impact the entire student population. We do not have sufficient funding to create a separate menu selection at this time.

There is no reliable data identifying vegetarian and vegan students. Our only source of information comes from district supervisors' tallies that indicate an average of three students per school, or less than 1% of enrollment have requested a meatless entree.

Our required "offer" meal service in secondary schools allows students to select non-meat items. While this satisfies the requirement for a federally-reimbursable meal for a vegetarian, it does not meet the requirements for a reimbursable meal for a vegan. A challenge and barrier to incorporating a variety of acceptable vegetarian or vegan options would be establishing the "nutritional profile" for soy-based products that

meets the protein component of a reimbursable meal. Without USDA approval of acceptable protein nutrition exchanges, we would not satisfy the meal component requirement needed for reimbursement. This would result in loss of federal reimbursement for soy-based vegetarian/vegan meals.

If the DOE were required to incorporate an additional vegetarian entree for ten percent of the current lunch participation, we estimate we would require a minimum of a two million dollar additional appropriation, inclusive of food and labor.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

LATE TESTIMONY

Person submitting testimony: Sally M. Belles, RD

Measure: HR 47 and HCR 59, Requesting the Board of Education to develop a policy to include vegetarian and vegan meal options in all school menu plans.

Committee: Committee on Health (HLT)

Rep. Ryan I. Yamane, Chair

Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Vice-Chairman

Committee on Education (EDN)

Rep. Roy M. Takumi, Chair

Rep. Lyla B. Berg, Vice-Chair

Day/Date of hearing: March 25, 2009

Time of hearing: 1400 hours

Location (conference room number): Conference Room 309

Testimony in Support of HR 47 and HCR 59, requesting the BOE to develop a policy to include Vegetarian and Vegan Meal options in all school menu plans

A poor diet leads to poor nutritional status and decreased performance in the academic setting for our school age children and teens. Research has shown that children, who eat a healthy, balanced breakfast score higher on standardized tests. In addition, childhood obesity is one of the most pressing public health and nutrition issues today and has become the most common chronic disease in childhood. Specifically, it is associated with the growing incidence of type II diabetes, poor self-esteem, and poor health as adults. The American Dietetic Association and the Hawaii Dietetic Association recommend that there be greater emphasis on a "Plant-Based" Diet including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes and nuts. Plant-based diets are nutrient-dense and naturally low in total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sodium.

It is well documented that persons following a healthy plant-based diet have a lower risk for developing diabetes, coronary heart disease, high-blood pressure and some cancers. Such individuals also tend not to be overweight or obese. If nutrition and health issues are addressed in our Hawaii schools, our children and teens are less likely to face chronic disease health risks as adults. This is important because overweight or obese children often grow up to become overweight or obese adults. Also, optimal nutritional status of our school children and teens may well enhance their experience and learning in school.

Vegetarian and vegan menu options may be relatively inexpensive. Also, such options would allow students who are vegetarian or vegan to participate in school lunch programs in our public schools. As a Registered Dietitian I support HR 47 and HCR 59.

Thank you for your consideration of this timely resolution and the opportunity to testify.

Sally M. Belles, RD

LATE TESTIMONY

berg1-Ana Maria

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Wednesday, March 25, 2009 12:37 PM
To: EDNtestimony
Cc: HARRISMDW001@hawaii.rr.com
Subject: Testimony for HR47 on 3/25/2009 2:00:00 PM

Testimony for EDN/HLT 3/25/2009 2:00:00 PM HR47

Conference room: 309
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
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Submitted on: 3/25/2009

Comments:

Since virtually all health authorities now advise the consumption of more fruits and vegetables, and only the animal food industry recommends more of their products, it's way past time for vegetarian options in the school lunch program.

It could be easily accomplished by starting the cafeteria line with a balanced vegan meal. Omnivores could then add dairy, meat, fish, egg, or poultry options as provided for that day by the school food service and as desired by the student.

That way, vegans would get their food uncontaminated, and omnivores could build their meal on a solid nutrient base.

The addition of animal foods would add very little nutritional value but it would satisfy the tastes of omnivore students.

