Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children

May 29, 2015

The Honorable Rick Snyder
Governor
State Capitol
Lansing, MI 48909

Re: VETO SB 139

Dear Governor Snyder:

We urge you to veto SB 139. This bill creates the broadest exemption from school nutrition standards for any state in the country.

We are facing an obesity epidemic across this country and especially here in Michigan – as is clear from your Dashboard. This bill would turn the item on your "Health and Wellness" Dashboard – "Schools Not Selling Unhealthy Food and Beverages" from trending in the right direction to immediately trending the wrong way.

The harsh reality is that for the first time in history, we have a whole generation of young people that will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

As currently written the bill allows for fundraisers **during school hours every school day.** No other state in the country comes close to elimination of the standard. As passed by the Legislature, the Michigan Department of Education is required to allow "not less than 2 fund-raising activities per week." In a 38-week school year, that equates to 76 fundraisers per year. The next closest state to a number that high is Illinois at 36 – but only for high school. The limit in Illinois for elementary school is 12 per year.

Even more disturbing is the final version removed a parental notification requirement. As approved by the House Education Committee, the fundraising entity would have been required to notify parents that the upcoming event failed to meet the nutritional guidelines. Many policymakers are constantly calling on greater personal responsibility to combat the obesity epidemic, yet this bill takes away an important tool of personal responsibility – simple notification to the parents.

Providing nutrition education in our schools is very important. Sending mixed messages with an overabundance of enticing alternatives to a healthy lunch in the middle of the school day would be a step in the wrong direction.

When it comes to fundraising, there are plenty of healthy alternatives that have raised as much or more money. A fun run or walk with pledges of support from family and friends would serve as just one example.

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The *Smart Snacks in Schools* nutrition guidelines provide limited regulation over food served or sold during the school day at a public school. Despite the rhetoric on the effect of these guidelines, the real impact is incredibly modest, as you will note from the most common scenarios:

- **Scenario 1: Sporting event, after school, sells popcorn, pizza, chips, candy and soft drinks.** *Smart Snacks in Schools* nutrition guidelines do not apply for events after school hours.

- **Scenario 2: Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) sells baked goods (packaged whole pies, whole cakes, etc.) during school hours.** *Smart Snacks in Schools* nutrition guidelines do not apply (exemption for items not intended for immediate consumption).

- **Scenario 3: Girl Scout Troop selling Girl Scout Cookies (or taking orders for cookies) during school hours.** *Smart Snacks in Schools* nutrition guidelines do not apply (exemption for items not intended for immediate consumption).

- **Scenario 4: Debate club sells Krispy Kreme doughnuts during school hours.** *Smart Snacks in Schools* nutrition guidelines do apply.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 139 – we urge you to veto this legislation. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Peter Ruddell at (517) 374-2703.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Maisner
Chair
Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

cc: Peter B. Ruddell, RWC Advocacy

About HKHM

Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan is a coalition dedicated to reducing childhood obesity in Michigan through strategic policy initiatives while working with state government leaders. HKHM is comprised of executive-level decision makers from nearly 200 organizations statewide dedicated to addressing childhood obesity and improving the health of Michigan's youngest residents. These organizations represent government, public and private sectors, school districts, health care and non-profit organizations.