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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, TRADE AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION
ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS
COMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGY
AND THE INTERNET
REPUBLICAN DEPUTY WHIP
REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE
REPUBLICAN STEERING COMMITTEE

Dear Chairman Upton,

I respectfully request that the Energy & Commerce Committee hold a hearing, to explore the potential impact of the Interagency Working Group, on Food Marketed to Children (IWG) recommendations for food marketing standards to children and teens. Under this proposal, companies would only be able to market and promote healthy food to kids ages 2 to 17, that make a meaningful contribution to a healthful diet and minimize the consumption of foods, which have a negative impact on weight or health—specifically saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and added sugars.

According to the Institute of Medicine, there is no link between advertisements and children's food choices. Furthermore, there is no scientific study to back up the argument that limiting children's exposure to food advertisements would combat obesity. These proposed guidelines are too broad and far reaching. Close to 90% of products most commonly consumed in the U.S. would not qualify to be sold, if these recommendations go into effect and are enforced. Even foods that should be encouraged in the healthy, balanced diets of children, such as whole grain cereals, would not be allowed to be marketed to children.

If adopted, the advertising ban would bar virtually all food advertising and marketing activity directed to kids and adolescents. This means that the food industry would have to terminate all community partnerships, because this would be considered marketing to children, even though these partnerships benefit communities across the country. Programs like Pizza Hut's national reading incentive program "Book It," and General Mill's Box Top Education program would cease to exist. The proposed guidelines even contradict current federal nutrition programs guidelines, such as the Women, Infant & Children (WIC) program.

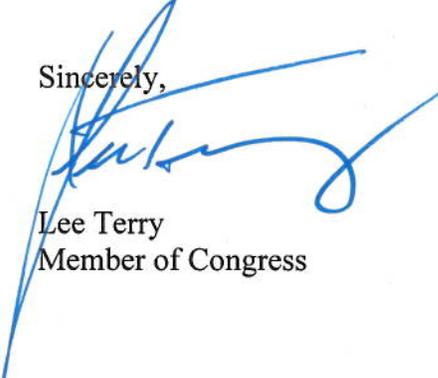
Childhood obesity in America is a significant problem. Nearly 17 percent of America's children are severely overweight—triple the number from just one generation ago. The IWG's proposed guidelines, however, ignore the root of the problem, by failing to address some of the other major factors that contribute to being overweight; such as, the decline in physical activity, both at home and in school. The guidelines even ignore the central role played by parents in making food decisions for their families.

I applaud the Committee's recent letter to the federal agencies, expressing its concerns with the IWG's proposed Nutrition Principles and the associated marketing restrictions, and even asking the IWG to withdraw its current proposal and start afresh. I look forward to seeing the agencies' response to the very descriptive questions included in the letter.

Thank you in advance for considering my request. I look forward to working with you and my colleagues to find ways to ensure that these proposed guidelines do not threaten American jobs nor infringe on free speech.

Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



Lee Terry
Member of Congress