

CATHY McMORRIS  
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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

September 25, 2006

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The Honorable Mike Johanns, Secretary  
United States Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Johanns,

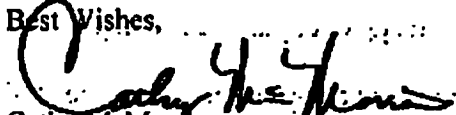
I am writing to express my support for the proposed rule to revise the food packages for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).

In April 2005, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released its final report on revisions to the WIC food support program. For the first time, this report recommended including fruits and vegetables in all WIC packages for participants six months of age or older. These new rules will ensure that WIC foods are consistent with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the current instant feeding practice guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics. It is imperative that we give healthy and nutritious options by adding fruits and vegetables to the WIC program.

I would like to recommend that USDA also include white potatoes as an eligible fruit and vegetable. The average potato with skin contains: 45% of the daily value for vitamin C, as much or more potassium than either bananas, spinach or broccoli, trace amounts of thiamin, riboflavin, folate, magnesium, phosphorous, iron and zinc, and are excellent source of fiber. The nutrition information for a potato is enough to validate why white potatoes should be considered a healthy option under the WIC program.

I appreciate your attention to this request and commend your work on the new recommended guidelines.

Best Wishes,

  
Cathy McMorris  
Member of Congress

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

November 3, 2006

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08-NP

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CO-2

Patricia Daniels  
Director, Food and Nutrition Services  
Supplemental Food Programs Division  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
3101 Park Center Drive, Suite 528  
Alexandria, VA 22302

Dear Director Daniels:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the USDA's proposed regulations that substantially revise the WIC Food Packages. I am pleased to support these long-awaited reforms. I commend the Department for proposing important changes to WIC that are consistent with the *2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and align with the American Academy of Pediatrics infant feeding recommendations. I believe that, when implemented, they will greatly strengthen the WIC program's ability to improve the nutrition and health status of millions of families.

**1. Timely Implementation of Final Rule.** The WIC Community has waited for 32 years for these comprehensive science-based nutritional revisions. State WIC agencies and local providers are eager to get started on the planning and implementation issues involved with so many major changes to WIC foods. Therefore, I urge USDA to conduct its analysis of the comments on the Proposed Rule quickly and efficiently, and **publish a Final Rule by mid-2007 at the very latest.** WIC families should not have to wait any longer for better WIC foods!

**2. Fruits and Vegetables.** I strongly support providing 8.2 million WIC mothers and young children with cash-value vouchers to purchase fruits and vegetables, as recommended by the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) Report: "WIC Food Packages: Time for a Change." The proposed rule has reduced the IOM-recommended amount of monthly vouchers in order to achieve overall cost neutrality. I urge USDA to work with Congress to secure increased federal funding in future years to bring the cash value of these fruit and vegetable vouchers up to the IOM-recommended levels, and to keep pace with inflation. This will better assist WIC families to purchase and consume fruits or vegetables each day. **However, the proposed voucher levels are an excellent start and should be immediately implemented**

**3. Other Positive Changes Will Improve Dietary Intake.** I support the proposals to reduce the amount of certain foods (milk, cheese, eggs, and juice) in order to better align WIC with current

Patricia Daniels  
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Dietary Guidelines and recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. In particular:

- The proposal will provide stronger incentives for continued breastfeeding by providing additional quantities/types of food for breastfeeding mothers. To further enhance the food package for fully breastfeeding women, I urge USDA to **raise the cash-value vouchers for fruits and vegetables to the original IOM-recommended amount of \$10 per month.**
- The proposal to **reduce juice and replace it with infant food at 6 months** will support recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics for introducing infants to fruits and vegetables at the appropriate age.
- The provision of **whole grain and soy options** will allow WIC to better serve California extremely diverse young families.
- The inclusion of **lower-fat milk and less cheese and eggs** supports adequate calcium intake, while at the same time lowering saturating fats and cholesterol in accordance with current dietary guidance.

All of these proposed changes will strongly reinforce WIC nutrition education messages, as well as address the cultural food preferences among California's diverse population.

We look forward to working with USDA and the WIC program to implement these excellent food package improvements over the next few years. These changes will be a major policy lever to improve community food security, address the obesity epidemic, and help low-income families make healthier food choices. Taken together, this regulatory proposal will ultimately have a positive impact on the health of women, infants and children in California.

Sincerely,



BOB FILNER  
Member of Congress

BF/ss  
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08-NP

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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

November 3, 2006

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NOV - 6 2006

C03

Ms. Patricia N. Daniels, Director  
Supplemental Food Programs Division  
U.S. Department of Agriculture - Food and Nutrition Services  
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 528  
Alexandria, Virginia 22302

**RE: Comments on WIC Food Packages Proposed Rule, Docket ID Number 0584-AD77.**

Dear Ms. Daniels,

As the Representative of the 47<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, it is my pleasure to provide comments on the USDA's proposed regulations that substantially revise the WIC Food Packages. I am pleased to support these long-awaited reforms. I commend the Department for proposing important changes to WIC that are consistent with the 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and align with the American Academy of Pediatrics infant feeding recommendations. I believe that, when implemented, they will greatly strengthen the WIC program's ability to improve the nutrition and health status of millions of families.

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**2. Fruits and Vegetables.** I strongly support providing 8.2 million WIC mothers and young children with cash-value vouchers to purchase fruits and vegetables, as recommended by the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) Report: "WIC Food Packages: Time for a Change." While the IOM recommended \$10/ and \$8/month vouchers, the proposed rule reduced this amount to \$8/ and \$6/month in order to achieve overall cost neutrality. I urge USDA to work with Congress to secure increased federal funding in future years to bring the cash value of these fruit and vegetable vouchers up to the IOM-recommended levels, and to keep pace with inflation. This will better assist WIC families to purchase and consume fruits or vegetables each day. **However, the proposed voucher levels are an excellent start and should be immediately implemented**

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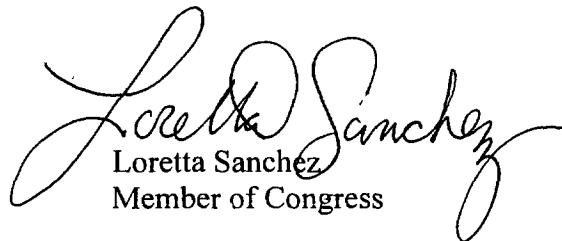
Dietary Guidelines and recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics. In particular:

- The proposal will provide stronger incentives for continued breastfeeding by providing less formula to partially breastfed infants and providing additional quantities/types of food for breastfeeding mothers. To further enhance the food package for fully breastfeeding women, I urge USDA to **raise the cash-value vouchers for fruits and vegetables to the original IOM-recommended amount of \$10 per month.**
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Very truly yours,

  
Loretta Sanchez  
Member of Congress

LS:anb