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Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund Praises Passage of Child Nutrition Reauthorization

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act Represents Major Step in Fight to Reverse Obesity Epidemic

(Washington DC) In a landmark achievement for children across the United States—including 32 million of whom depend on federal food programs—the House of Representatives today passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act. The Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund has long-supported this needed initiative to increase the nutritional quality of all foods served on school campuses and to improve the long-term health of America’s children. The bill now goes to President Obama for his signature.

“Our schools should be models of good nutrition that enable and inspire our children to lead healthier, fuller lives,” said Penny Lee, Executive Director of the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund. “By making more nutritious foods more accessible throughout school campuses and reducing less nutritious options, Congress has taken a significant step towards giving our youth a fair shot at good health. Recently, alarming reports have told us that today’s kids face a lifetime full of chronic disease stemming from obesity and, consequently, they may even live shorter lifespans than their parents. However with the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, parents can rest a little bit easier, knowing that our children will soon receive the nutritious food they need to help reach their full potential.”

Lee Continued, “This action also represents a strong investment in reducing the strains on our nation’s health care system. New research suggests that Americans face a \$168 billion annual tab in health care costs stemming from obesity-related illness. Put in perspective, nearly 17 percent of U.S. medical costs can be attributed to obesity. It is imperative that Congress continue to take steps like this one that can begin to reverse this epidemic.”

Among other things, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act will increase funding for nutritious meals, update nutritional standards, increase reimbursement for federal school lunches, and promote overall wellness through better nutrition and increased physical activity. In addition, the measure will enable local educational agencies to ensure that all food served on school campuses “promote student health and reduce childhood obesity.” Additionally, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act reduces the bureaucratic red tape that currently prevents too many families from getting the meals they are eligible to receive.

“With this victory achieved, we now look ahead to the new Congress to continue investing in our nation’s health. And, with such measures as the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and multi-year transportation funding, Congress will have important opportunities to further expand physical activity and education for both children and adults. The Campaign looks

forward to working with members of the House and Senate to continue this positive momentum,” concluded Lee.

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About the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund

The Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund is dedicated to federal policy changes that can reverse one of America’s costliest diseases. The Campaign convenes leaders from industry, academia, public health and associations to speak with one voice for measures to reverse the obesity epidemic and promote healthy weight in children and adults.