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## **American Frozen Food Institute lauds House passage of provision urging reconsideration of school meal rules**

**McLean, VA** – American Frozen Food Institute (AFFI) President and CEO Kraig R. Naasz issued the following statement in support of a provision contained in the fiscal year (FY) 2012 funding bill for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), which directs USDA to abandon newly proposed nutrition standards for federal school meal programs. The bill was approved today by the U.S. House of Representatives on a vote of 217-203.

Specifically, the bill directs USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to issue a new proposed rule for nutrition standards that does not increase the cost of providing school meals. The provision emphasizes the need for utilizing practical timelines to introduce such standards, cautioning that USDA's overly aggressive implementation schedule and unrealistic nutritional demands will increase costs for schools by \$7 billion over a five-year period.

"AFFI appreciates the leadership House members have shown for finding a sensible road forward to improve nutrition in school meals. We are particularly grateful to House Agriculture Nutrition and Horticulture Subcommittee Chair Jean Schmidt (R-Ohio) for her efforts to ensure that schools and school kids have access to a wide range of healthy and affordable food choices.

"We look forward to continuing our work with congressional allies and leaders in the education and school nutrition community to promote a balanced approach for strengthening school nutrition as debate now shifts to the U.S. Senate.

"Improving childhood nutrition is a noble goal, and one that AFFI wholeheartedly supports. Families, schools and food producers are all too aware of the rising economic and societal costs associated with America's childhood obesity crisis and all share a desire to find a solution.

"However, while done with the best of intentions, USDA's proposed new standards for federal school breakfasts and lunches would force school districts to grapple with unmanageable new costs. By USDA's own estimates, its proposed nutrition standards would increase costs to schools by 50 cents per breakfast served and 14 cents per lunch.

“In particular, USDA’s proposal to limit servings of potatoes, corn, peas and lima beans to one cup per student per week at lunch, while unfairly downgrading the nutritional value of tomato sauce used to make pizza and other foods, denies schools affordable, healthy food options and robs kids of foods that taste good and are good for them.”

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*The American Frozen Food Institute is the national trade association promoting and representing the interests of all segments of the frozen food industry. AFFI works to foster industry development and growth, and advocates before legislative and regulatory entities on the industry’s behalf. More information can be found at [www.affi.com](http://www.affi.com).*