

**Testimony of Scott Faber
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**Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and
Related Agencies**

House Committee on Appropriations

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Good Morning. My name is Scott Faber, and I am Vice President of Federal Affairs for the Grocery Manufacturers Association (GMA), which represents more than 300 food, beverage, and consumer product companies.

We look forward to working with you to reauthorize the Child Nutrition Act to improve the health of America's children. To do so, we must provide USDA with the resources and tools needed to feed many more children, and we must give USDA clear authority to set science-based standards for all foods served and sold to students during the school day in the school environment.

We share the priorities announced last week by USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack, including: new science-based standards for competitive foods sold in schools; increased access to meal programs; more education about healthy diets; more healthy foods in the cafeteria; and, increased training and better equipment in the kitchen. As Secretary Vilsack said, "The health of our nation

depends on the health of our children. We will not succeed if any of our children aren't learning as they should because they are hungry, and cannot achieve their potential because they aren't healthy.”

In addition, we look forward to working with you to meet the goal recently set by First Lady Michelle Obama: to solve the problem of childhood obesity within a generation.

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates have tripled. As a result, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. Many of the children born since the turn of the century will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives and many others will face obesity-related health problems like heart disease and high blood pressure.

To meet this challenge, we must provide parents and children with more healthy choices, promote healthy diets and provide new opportunities for physical activity. As the First Lady recently said, “This is not like a disease where we're still waiting for a cure to be discovered – we know the cure for this. We have everything we need, right now, to help our kids lead healthy lives.”

Everyone has a role to play in this fight: the public sector, private industry and parents. We pledge to do our part by continually changing the way we develop and market our products.

In recent years, we have changed the ingredients in more than 10,000 of our products to reduce calories, fats, sugars and sodium without sacrificing the taste, convenience and affordability that

consumers demand. We are also working with FDA and USDA to devise new food labels that will make information about calories and other nutrition facts clearer for busy parents and consumers. We have significantly increased messages about healthy foods and active lifestyles during children's programming. Finally, we are increasing our donations to food banks to ensure that emergency food providers can meet increased demand for food.

Our industry has a role to play, and we are working hard every day to make our food better and provide consumers with healthy products. Government at all levels has an important role to play as well.

Government can do more to promote physical activity in school and after school. Government can do more to promote nutrition education – not only in school, but in the marketplace and the workplace as well. Government can do more to promote greater access to healthy foods by bringing grocery stores and farmer's markets to underserved areas. And, government can do more to ensure that low-income children participate in federal nutrition programs by automatically enrolling children who participate in other government programs and by expanding the delivery of summer feeding programs.

We look forward to working with you to reduce the number of hungry children – and to increase the number of healthy children in America's schools and neighborhoods. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.