

Rep. O'Brien offered the following concurrent resolution:

House Concurrent Resolution No. 27.

A concurrent resolution to urge the President of the United States and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to reverse their decision to exclude fresh white potatoes from Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program eligibility.

Whereas, On March 4, 2014, the USDA officially excluded fresh white potatoes from the WIC program, a decision based on outdated 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and USDA. It was only in 2010 that new DGA recommendations were developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and USDA that called for an increase of starchy vegetable consumption for women and children including fresh white potatoes; and

Whereas, Since 1996, vegetable consumption levels have dropped for all Americans, including a 29 percent decline in consumption of fresh white potatoes between 1996 and 2010. In their own statement, the USDA recognizes the contribution of white potatoes to a healthy diet by stating that "white potatoes can be a healthful part of one's diet and that "nutrition education provided to WIC participants will continue to include white potatoes as a healthy source of nutrients and an important part of a healthful diet"; and

Whereas, WIC program participants consume fewer vegetables than non-participants while overall, U.S. women and children are under-consuming starchy vegetables according to intake recommendations. Consumption data do not support the notion that WIC participants are over consuming potatoes. According to the Center for Disease Control and the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics, women participating in the WIC program consumed only 2.1 percent of their total calories from fresh white potatoes while non-WIC participants took in 2.4 percent of their calories from fresh white potatoes; and

Whereas, The WIC guidelines create purchasing disparity by excluding the purchase of fresh white potatoes at retail grocery stores, but, allowing WIC participants to purchase them at farmer's markets. White potatoes are the only fresh vegetable excluded from the WIC program even though Congress has provided clear direction for their inclusion; and

Whereas, Nutritional data support the value of white potatoes in providing key nutrients, including potassium, vitamin C, fiber and folate to WIC mothers and their young children. Potatoes are cholesterol-free, fat-free, and sodium-free, and can be served in countless healthy ways; and

Whereas, Participants of WIC and U.S. taxpayers deserve federal nutrition policy that is science-based and has the potential to improve the health of participants. Fresh white potatoes are one of the most cost effective sources of providing nutrients and WIC participants should be allowed to nourish themselves and their young children in a manner that maximizes their WIC vouchers; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Michigan House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That we urge the President and the United States Department of Agriculture to reverse their decision to exclude fresh white potatoes from the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program eligibility and to focus on encouraging the consumption of all fresh fruits and vegetables for WIC participants to help meet nutritional intake recommendations; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture, and members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation.