

Senators Schuitmaker, Green, Kahn, Hansen, Emmons, Casperson, Booher, Jansen, Robertson, Hune, Kowall, Moolenaar, Marleau, Richardville, Hildenbrand, Jones, Pappageorge, Pavlov, Proos, Nofs, Caswell, Walker, Meekhof, Smith, Bieda, Ananich, Gregory, Young, Hood and Johnson offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution No. 138.

A resolution to urge the President 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Whereas, On March 4, 2014, the USDA officially excluded fresh white potatoes from the WIC program, a decision based on outdated 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and USDA; and

Whereas, In 2010, new DGA recommendations were developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and USDA calling for an increase of starchy vegetable consumption for women and children, including fresh white potatoes; and

Whereas, In their own statement, the USDA recognizes 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, Since 1996, vegetable consumption levels have dropped for all Americans, including a decline in consumption of fresh white potatoes by 29 percent between 1996 and 2010; and

Whereas, Participants using the WIC program consume 24 percent fewer vegetables than those not using the WIC program, while overall, U.S. women and children are underconsuming starchy vegetables and failing to meet intake recommendations; and

Whereas, Consumption data do not support the notion that WIC participants are overconsuming potatoes. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 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, Fresh white potatoes are the only fresh fruit or vegetable excluded from the WIC program, even though Congress has provided clear direction for the inclusion of fresh white potatoes in the WIC program; and

Whereas, The WIC guidelines create purchasing disparity by excluding the purchase of fresh white potatoes at retail grocery stores; however, they allow WIC participants to purchase them at farmer's markets; and

Whereas, Nutritional data support the value of fresh white potatoes in providing key nutrients, including potassium, vitamin C, fiber, and foliate, to WIC mothers and their young children; and

Whereas, Potatoes are cholesterol-free, fat-free, and sodium-free and can be served in countless healthy ways; and

Whereas, WIC participants and U.S. taxpayers deserve federal nutrition policy that is science-based and has potential to improve the health of participants; and

Whereas, Fresh white potatoes are one of the most cost-effective sources of providing nutrients, and WIC participants should be allowed to supply nutrients to themselves and their young children in a manner that maximize their WIC vouchers; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate, 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 and the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture.