

## Support the ADD SOY Act for Healthier School Meals *Addressing Digestive Distress in Stomachs of Our Youth (ADD SOY) Act (H.R. 1619)*

The ADD SOY Act is a bipartisan initiative that calls for a much-needed change in our public-school lunchrooms. This legislation, championed by Reps. Troy A Carter (D-LA) and Nancy Mace (R-SC), tackles the outdated milk mandates in our schools and aims to provide our children with more inclusive and nutritious meal options.

### *Why Support the ADD SOY Act?*

- **Choice in Nutrition.** The ADD SOY Act eliminates the mandate that forces every student receiving nutrition assistance through the National School Lunch Program to receive cow's milk, regardless of their preferences or dietary needs. It's about giving kids the power to choose what they consume.
- **Program Consistency.** The Women Infants and Children's Program (WIC) provides non-dairy options for recipients of this nutrition-assistance program, but the NSLP does not. That's an unacceptable inconsistency in our federal nutrition-assistance programs, according to backers of H.R. 1619.
- **Lactose Intolerance Prevalence.** A significant percentage of Black, Pacific Islander, Asian, Native American, and Latino individuals are lactose intolerant. Most people experience a reduced ability to digest lactose after infancy, and this is particularly common among individuals of various ethnic backgrounds. The ADD SOY Act recognizes the diverse dietary needs of our students.
- **Food Waste Reduction.** The current system results in substantial food waste, with nearly 29 percent of milk cartons served in schools ending up in the garbage, unopened and unwanted. This not only wastes valuable resources but also contributes to environmental issues. By providing soy milk as an option, we can reduce this waste and save resources.
- **Nutritional Equivalency.** In 2020, the U.S. Dietary Guidelines recognized fortified soy milk as nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk. Moreover, allergies to cow's milk are significantly more common than soy milk allergies, making soy milk a safer and healthier choice for many children.



- **Enhancing Learning.** Mandating the delivery of a food staple that causes discomfort or illness to children in a nutrition-assistance program can hinder their ability to concentrate in the classroom.
- **Fruitless Suffering of Dairy Cows.** Dairy cows have been engineered to produce milk at levels and rates that are unsuited for their health. Just decades ago, a dairy cow produced 433.9 gallons of milk per year. But with selective breeding for hyperproduction, a Holstein on an industrialized farm now produces 2,695 gallons annually to keep up with the demand that our government and the industry have manufactured. That unbelievable level of production taxes her system and leads to an array of health problems — from inflammation of the udders to foot and leg problems resulting from the massive body mass they must carry.

The ADD SOY Act is a critical step toward modernizing our school nutrition programs and ensuring that every child has access to dietary options that are both nutritious and accommodating of their needs. By supporting this legislation, you're advocating for healthier, more inclusive school meals that benefit the well-being and educational outcomes of our nation's youth. Let's put an end to outdated milk mandates and provide our children with the choice and nutrition they deserve.

*Endorsing organizations for the ADD SOY Act:* National Rural Education Association, National Coalition for Healthy Schools, National Urban League, and the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America.