

Ohio House of Representatives - Education and Career Readiness Committee  
Proponent Testimony – House Bill 224  
Jessica Shelly – Cincinnati Public Schools, Food Service Director  
January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

My name is Jessica Shelly, and I am the Food Service Director for Cincinnati Public Schools. I am writing today to express my full interest in having HB 224 passed to help me in my endeavors to continue to provide my students at Cincinnati Public Schools healthy and delicious meals each day while being fiscally accountable with all monies I receive from the federal government and the state of Ohio to operate my essential nutrition program.

Cincinnati Public Schools serves over 36,000 students with a free/reduce lunch meal program eligibility rate of 85%. We are proud to serve over 25,000 breakfast and 30,000 lunches each school day. With each of these meals, along with delicious entree choices, garden salad bar, steamed vegetables, and fresh fruit, a nutritious milk is served to help our students get the calcium and Vitamin D they need to help them grow healthy and strong. We also offer protein items such as string cheese and yogurts as meal and side item choices.

Unfortunately, sometimes a student's eyes are bigger than their stomachs, and thanks to share tables, students are able to place prepackaged, wrapped items on a share table for other students who may need an extra boost of nutrients to grab and consume. While the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has issued guidance which allows for schools to have share tables to include all prepackaged, wrapped items, ODH also requires schools to discard all foods that are temperature sensitive items, such as milk, string cheese, and yogurt. This results in our district having to discard 25-100 milk and other temperature sensitive items each day. This is an incredible waste of food, and it is also a waste of tax payer money.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has advised school districts that they should make every effort to recapture ALL food items from share tables for reservice to reduce food waste and to encourage fiscal responsibility with federal funds. This means that schools are encouraged by USDA to pull back in for accountability and reservice items like cereal bowls, crackers, condiments, etc. Unfortunately, the current Ohio Uniform Food Code and guidance issued by ODH does not allow for us to be fiscally responsible and reservice all items as we must discard the copious amounts of nutritious milk, string cheese, and yogurt from share tables each day.

All school districts are already required under federal law to have a very strict food safety plan in place called Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP). This food safety plan could be expanded to include share tables and ensure that all food from share tables are kept at proper temperature. At Cincinnati Public Schools, all milk, string cheese, and yogurt on share tables are kept in insulated bags with a ice packet and a thermometer to ensure all foods are kept at 41 degrees or lower. We are confident in the safety of these items to be

able to be reserved as USDA recommends. Instead, we discard these completely safe items after each meal service.

This waste of milk, string cheese, and yogurt equates to a fiscal cost to the tax payer of almost \$500,000 each year. This is federal money from USDA that I could instead be spending on local Ohio farm produce and Ohio manufacturer food products, equipment, and goods.

The full legalization of share tables would be a huge benefit my district by allowing me to be a be fully fiscally accountable to the tax payers of Ohio. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to continuing to serve the children of Ohio nutritious and delicious meals to have them fueled and ready to learn in the classroom each day.