

November 10, 2015

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington DC, 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman, U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations for Agriculture, Rural Development,
Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations for Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman, U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health
and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Appropriations for Labor, Health and Human
Services, and Education

Re: Agriculture and Labor/HHS Appropriations Riders on Dietary Guidelines

As leaders in medicine, public health, nutrition science, and related fields, the undersigned organizations write to ask that riders undermining the science base and the public health benefits of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans not be included on any omnibus Fiscal Year 2016 Appropriations Bill.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans provide a critical foundation for local, state, and federal efforts to improve the health of children and adults in our communities. Two-thirds of Americans are overweight or have obesity, and one-half suffer from diet-related chronic disease. Alarming, nearly one in three school-age children and adolescents is overweight or has obesity and more and more children are showing signs of chronic diseases that were once adult-onset only, such as type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. Obesity, overweight, and many chronic conditions can be mitigated and in many cases, prevented with proper nutrition and nutrition guidance. To inform public policies that address this dire need, the Dietary Guidelines provide a

scientific basis for critical federal nutrition policies and programs, and a roadmap for our community-based public health programs.

Publication of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines should proceed without undue interference by Congress. Science, not politics, should drive the federal government's efforts to revise the guidelines. The riders considered earlier this year would set a terrible anti-science precedent, as they would enact restrictions on the scope of the Guidelines long after the core body of work analyzing the science has concluded. Such restrictions would also produce inappropriately politicized results. For example, the rider in the House Agriculture and Labor-HHS appropriations bills would prevent the Dietary Guidelines from advising children and adults about the well-founded relationship between sugar and cavities or between a sedentary lifestyle and obesity, while the Senate rider could mean that common-sense policies, including recommendations on physical activity, would be excluded. Nutrition and physical activity are integral to a healthy population, and it's essential that health care providers, dietitians, and public health are able to continue to advise patients and communities based on what the evidence recommends.

The 2015 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) followed well-established and rigorous procedures in its systematic review of the evidence. Nutrition-focused systematic reviews, unlike research for drug development, employ varied methodologies, including but not limited to randomized clinical trials. In addition to the Nutrition Evidence Library reviews, the DGAC appropriately considered other sources of reliable evidence, such as food pattern modeling and other external systematic reviews, in its deliberations. Moreover, the grading rubric used by the 2015 DGAC is consistent with past practices.

In the service of public health and sound science, we respectfully request that you oppose any appropriations riders to alter the well-established process for developing and publishing the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Allowing any rider to move forward that would alter or limit the science-based process of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans or delay their release would be detrimental to the health of Americans.