

# ADD SOY Act Introduced in House, Would End Milk Mandate in Public Schools and Give Kids a Healthy Choice

*Legislation championed by Reps. Troy Carter and Nancy Mace*

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES, March 20, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Animal Wellness Action](#), [Switch4Good](#), the [Center for a Humane Economy](#), and the Animal Wellness Foundation applauded Reps. Troy Carter, D-La., and Nancy Mace, R-S.C., for introducing the ADD SOY Act on Friday in the U.S. House of Representatives.

H.R. 1619, the Addressing Digestive Distress in Stomachs of Our Youth (ADD SOY) Act, requires public schools to offer soy milk to kids participating in the National School Lunch Program and directs USDA to fully reimburse schools for the cost of the soy milk provided.



Many school kids—especially those of color—are lactose-intolerant. The ADD SOY Act would help them enjoy a nutritious meal at school without gastric distress.

Essentially mandating a carton of milk on every lunch tray for 30 million kids, USDA now provides a reimbursement of \$1 billion for cow's milk to public schools across the country, denying the millions of kids who are lactose intolerant a nutritious fluid beverage option. According to the USDA's findings, 29 percent of the cartons of milk served in our schools are thrown in the garbage unopened, sending \$300 million in tax dollars into the trash. Another study found that kids discard 45 million gallons of milk each year.

Based on documented rates of lactose intolerance among different ethnic groups, perhaps 17 million of the 30 million kids may have some degree of lactose intolerance (LI), with especially high rates for blacks, Latinos, Asian Americans, and Native Americans. In fact, the National Institutes of Health reports the majority of all people have a reduced ability to digest lactose after infancy, and LI "is also very common in people of West African, Arab, Jewish, Greek and Italian descent."



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*Wayne Pacelle, president,  
Animal Wellness Action*

"Our nation's 'milk mandate' is a sure-fire way to cause digestive distress and to impede classroom learning for millions of school kids with lactose-intolerance," said Wayne Pacelle, President of Animal Wellness Action. "It constitutes reckless wasting of tax dollars and irresponsible food waste, easily remedied by giving kids a soy milk option. We are excited to work with Reps. Troy Carter and Nancy Mace to deliver nutritional choice in the lunchroom."

"It is both thrilling and heartening to see this bill come

alive after years of fighting for all children with lactose intolerance or dairy allergies," said Dotsie Bausch, president of Switch4Good and an Olympic Silver Medalist in cycling (London 2012). "In the name of social and educational justice, we now urge our leaders in the House to amend the Richard B. Russel National School Lunch Act so that all children have access to nutrition that does not make them sick."

In 2020, the US Dietary Guidelines recognized fortified soy milk as a nutritional equivalent to dairy cow milk. But nutritional equivalency and cafeteria availability are not the same thing, and schools have failed to make soy milk readily available. Under H.R. 1619, USDA would reimburse schools for purchasing soy milk, just as they do for cow's milk. The bill would also support many Midwest farmer businesses; soybeans are one of the biggest and most important agricultural crops in the U.S., with more than 500,000 producers.

"It is abundantly clear that the current milk substitute system that USDA employs is delivering detrimental impacts on BIPOC school children," said Rep. Carter. "Too many children who cannot safely or comfortably consume dairy are being forced to accept containers of cow's milk on their lunch trays. My ADD SOY Act ensures the health and nutritional needs of all our nation's students are met. America needs to embrace its diversity at the lunch counter." You can see a brief floor speech from [Rep. Carter here](#).

"The federal government is wasting \$300 million of our tax dollars a year by mandating that every school kid getting nutrition assistance has a carton of cow's milk on the tray even though millions of them don't want it and get sick from it," said Rep. Mace. "Thirty percent of kids throw the milk away, and hundreds of millions of tax dollars wasted is not simply spilled milk. Kids should have a healthy choice in lunchrooms."

The Women Infants and Children's Program (WIC) provides non-dairy options for recipients of this nutrition-assistance program. But the NSLP does not, and that's an unacceptable inconsistency in our federal nutrition-assistance programs, according to backers of H.R. 1619. "The government is overreaching by subsidizing and promoting milk beyond its natural appeal to consumers," added Bausch.

## ABOUT

Animal Wellness Action is a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(4) organization with a mission of helping animals by promoting legal standards forbidding cruelty. We champion causes that alleviate the suffering of companion animals, farm animals, and wildlife. We advocate for policies to stop dogfighting and cockfighting and other forms of malicious cruelty and to confront factory farming and other systemic forms of animal exploitation. To prevent cruelty, we promote enacting good public policies, and we work to enforce those policies. To enact good laws, we must elect good lawmakers, and that's why we remind voters which candidates care about our issues and which ones don't. We believe helping animals helps us all.

Animal Wellness Foundation is a Los Angeles-based private charitable organization whose mission is to help animals by making veterinary care available to everyone with a pet, regardless of economic ability. The group organizes rescue efforts and medical services for dogs and cats in need and helps homeless pets find a loving caregiver. The Foundation advocates for getting veterinarians to the front lines of the animal welfare movement; promoting responsible pet ownership; and vaccinating animals against infectious diseases such as distemper. They also support policies that prevent animal cruelty and alleviate suffering. The Animal Wellness Foundation believes helping animals helps us all.

The Center for a Humane Economy is a non-profit organization that focuses on influencing the conduct of corporations to forge a humane economic order. The first organization of its kind in the animal protection movement, the Center encourages businesses to honor their social responsibilities in a culture where consumers, investors, and other key stakeholders abhor cruelty and the degradation of the environment and embrace innovation as a means of eliminating both.

Switch4Good is an evidence-based nonprofit organization advocating for a dairy-free world and dismantling the disinformation Big Dairy feeds the public, for the sake of human health, food justice, and the future of our planet. Its coalition of health experts, athletes, social justice warriors, enlightened policymakers, and progressive corporations promotes ethical lifestyles and widespread behavioral change related to how we eat.

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