

Lactose-Intolerant 6-Year-Old Forced to Clean Feces Sparks Call for Healthy School Beverage Choices

Even though her mother said she gets sick from drinking cow's milk, school gave her no non-dairy option

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, February 13, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Washington D.C. — A recent health and wellness incident at Rollins Place Elementary School in Zachary, La., highlights the urgent need for dietary reform in schools nationwide, with a little girl made sick and embarrassed after having a predictable and adverse physical reaction to cow's milk.



According to the NIH, 75 percent of Blacks are lactose-intolerant, yet there is a “milk mandate” for kids participating in the NSLP.

This has been a continuing problem for lactose-intolerant kids across the nation, and it's why lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are poised to introduce the Freedom in the School Cafeteria in Lunch (FISCAL) Act to prevent kids from getting sick from cow's milk and to give them a nutritional plant-based beverage in its place.

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According to the National Institutes of Health, more than a third of Americans are lactose-intolerant, and the rates are especially high for children of African and Asian descent, among others.

A 6-year-old girl, despite documented medical records of lactose intolerance and perhaps dairy allergies, was given cow's milk at breakfast in the National School Lunch Program. [She soon became ill](#) and requested a bathroom break multiple times, which were denied by her teacher.

The child ultimately experienced diarrhea and was then forced to clean up the mess herself,

humiliating her and evidencing a broad lack of understanding that health issues are very frequently tied to consumption of dairy milk. According to the NIH, 75 percent of Blacks are lactose-intolerant, yet there is a “milk mandate” for kids participating in the NSLP.

“The school leadership was in a terrible position because they are forced every day to give kids cow’s milk even if kids get sick from it,” said Wayne Pacelle, president of Animal Wellness Action and the Center for a Humane Economy. “We need a revamped national food policy that makes healthy and nutritious plant-based milk products available to kids as an alternative to cow’s milk.”

“We cannot and should not think of this as a one-off incident,” said Dotsie Bausch, president of Switch4Good and a silver-medal-winning cyclist for the U.S. Olympic team.

“According to NIH data, we have at least 15 million kids, out of a total of 30 million participants in the national school lunch program, with lactose-intolerance or dairy allergies,” she said. “We see first-hand every year how desperate kids are for another choice, as according to the USDA, 29% of the cow’s milk cartons are thrown away by the kids unopened! We must do right by our nation’s children and choose fairness and free choice over politics.”

The school district has since issued an apology and claims to have retrained staff. However, this distressing event underscores the broader issue: children with dairy allergies should have access to safe, plant-based alternatives in school meal programs.

U.S. Representatives Troy Carter, D-La., and Nancy Mace, R-S.C., and Senators John Fetterman, D-Pa., and John Kennedy, R-La., introduced legislation last Congress to require plant-based options be available to kids given the widespread lactose-intolerance. These lawmakers, and others from across the country, are expected to introduce modified legislation in the coming weeks.

Currently, the National School Lunch Program calls for cow’s milk only when it comes to nutritious beverages, which can trigger adverse health outcomes for countless if they drink it.

“This little girl is just an extreme case of a circumstance that befalls millions of kids every day in America,” said Kendrick Farris, a three-time Olympic weightlifter from Shreveport. Farris is lactose-intolerant and also had problems with the milk mandate when he was growing up in north Louisiana.

Animal-welfare groups and pro-health advocates are calling on Congress to pass legislation requiring the USDA to provide full reimbursement for soy milk in schools, which provide a non-dairy, nutritionally equivalent option for lactose-intolerant children.

The FISCAL Act would require public schools to offer a nutritionally equivalent soy milk option to kids participating in the NSLP and allow for the USDA to reimburse schools for those purchases, just as it does for cow’s milk.

The legislation has been endorsed by a wide variety of organizations, including the National Urban League, the National Action Network, and other civil rights, nutrition, government waste, and animal-welfare groups. There are 550,000 soybean farmers in the United States who tout soybeans as health-promoting.

Under law, the USDA now provides a reimbursement of \$1 billion for cow's milk to public schools across the country, placing a carton of milk on every tray. According to the USDA's findings, 29% of the cartons of milk served in our schools are thrown in the garbage unopened, sending at least \$300 million in tax dollars into the trash. Another study found that kids discard 45 million gallons of milk each year.

Pacelle said his groups are keenly interested in the FISCAL Act because of the unnecessary distress the excess milk production causes among dairy cows, only to have their milk tossed into the trash bin. Dairy cows now produce seven times as much milk as they did 50 years ago, leading to a range of health ailments, including mastitis and lameness. They are kept continually pregnant and separated from their calves shortly after giving birth.

"We put cows through a lot and then see tens of millions of their output tossed into the trash because kids don't want the product," Pacelle said. "That is not fair to the animals and does not honor their sacrifice."

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