



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 904

Resolution calling upon the New York State Education Department and the New York City Department of Education to use only meat, poultry, and produce that has been certified as organic by the United States Department of Agriculture.

By Council Members Kallos and Espinal

Whereas, School breakfast and lunch are national programs, authorized by Congress and administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); and

Whereas, The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is part of the University of the State of New York, one of the most complete, interconnected systems of educational services in the United States (U.S.); and

Whereas, Over 63 percent of New York State's children qualify for free or reduced meals in school and their families rely on these resources to keep their children healthy and well-nourished during the week; and

Whereas, New York State schools may participate in the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service Child Nutrition Program, School Breakfast Program, Afterschool Snack Program, and the Special Milk Program; and

Whereas, All participating local education agencies in New York are required by federal law to establish and implement, for all schools under its jurisdiction, local school wellness policies that meet minimum standards designed to promote sound nutrition, student health, reduce childhood obesity, and provide transparency to the public on the school nutrition environment; and

Whereas, The NYSED launched the Healthy Schools Program in 2006 to help schools become healthier places for both students and teachers by, having healthy foods and beverages in the cafeteria and vending machines, increasing physical activity, and providing resources for teachers and staff to become healthy role

models; and

Whereas, The New York City Department of Education (DOE) is the largest system of public schools in the U.S., serving approximately 1.1 million students in more than 1,800 schools; and

Whereas, According to the DOE, its Office of School Food, known as “SchoolFood”, is the largest food service provider in the U.S., providing over 850,000 total meals each day, of which 700,000 are provided to students free of charge in over 1,700 locations including City public elementary, middle, special education, high schools, charter, and some non-public schools; and

Whereas, Schoolfood works closely with the food industry such as food processors, manufacturers, and distributors, to serve food that meets the USDA standards for school meals and the New York City Food Standards; and

Whereas, Additionally, Schoolfood’s nutrition standards not only meet but exceed USDA’s Nutrition Standards for school meals by not using food additives such as artificial colors or flavors, non-nutritive sweeteners, or preservatives and restricting high fructose corn syrup where feasible; and

Whereas, Moreover, Schoolfood has partnered with Grow to Learn NYC to form a Citywide School initiative to connect schools and community gardens with school lunch meals through the seasonal harvest events and educational activities; and

Whereas, According to data published by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), more antibiotics are sold in the U.S. for food-producing animals as opposed to people, which contributes to the proliferation of antibiotic-resistant bacteria in food-producing animals; and

Whereas, The Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that some bacteria have become resistant to more than one type of antibiotic, and can be transmitted from food-producing animals to humans through the food supply, making it more difficult to treat the infections they cause; and

Whereas, This routine and unnecessary use of antibiotics contributes significantly to the rise of resistant bacterial infections in people and government tests of raw supermarket meat revealed that 55% of ground beef,

81% of ground turkey, 69% of pork chops, and 39% of poultry had antibiotics; and

Whereas, According to the CDC, each year in the U.S., at least 2 million people become infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics and at least 23,000 people die each year as a direct result of these infections and many more people die from other conditions that were complicated by an antibiotic-resistant infection; and

Whereas, A recent report by the Consumer Reports National Research Center found that 85% of doctors surveyed had diagnosed one or more of their patients with a multi-drug resistant bacterial infection and that 93% of the doctors surveyed were concerned with the use of antibiotics in livestock production facilities for animals that are not sick; and

Whereas, USDA regulations to certify meat as organic require that animals be raised in living conditions accommodating their natural behavior, for example the ability to graze on pasture, be fed 100% organic feed and forage, and not be administered with antibiotics or hormones; and

Whereas, In order for produce to be certified as organic, USDA regulations require that produce be grown on soil where prohibited substances such as synthetic fertilizers and pesticides have not been applied for three years prior to harvest, and if a synthetic substance has been used to achieve a specific purpose, that substance must be approved in accordance with certain criteria related to its effects on human health and the environment; and

Whereas, Health Care Without Harm (HCHW) is an international coalition including hospitals, medical professionals, community groups, health-affected constituencies, and environmental health organizations, that encouraged the FDA to evaluate the use of medically important antibiotics in animals and animal feed to protect human health; and

Whereas, To encourage the opportunities for the healthy outcomes of the many New York City students receiving school breakfast and lunch meals, school food standards should be improved; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the New York State Education

Department and the New York City Department of Education to use only meat, poultry, and produce that has been certified as organic by the United States Department of Agriculture.

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