

Rep. Schuitmaker offered the following resolution:

House Resolution No. 413.

A resolution to urge the Congress of the United States and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to continue to promote and prioritize the establishment of local farm-to-school initiatives.

Whereas, Local farm-to-school initiatives improve child nutrition and promote local farming communities. These programs emphasize the purchase and availability of fresher and more nutritious local foods for consumption in schools. In addition, they provide an opportunity for students to gain a greater appreciation of where their food comes from and enhance markets for local farmers. Strong local markets reduce food costs and fuel use associated with transporting foods long distances and increase food security; and

Whereas, The federal government plays a critical role in the success of local farm-to-school initiatives. Federal support can make the difference between a successful farm-to-school program and a failed one. In particular, placing a priority on farm-to-school programs and giving schools flexibility in the use of federal funding received for school meal programs would make a huge difference; and

Whereas, The 2008 federal farm bill (P.L. 110-246) made major strides to remove roadblocks and encourage the establishment of farm-to-school initiatives. Under the enacted bill, schools will now be able to show a preference for locally grown and raised foods without risking the loss of critical funds. In addition, the bill authorizes funding for grants that may be used to make fresh fruits and vegetables available in elementary schools and develop hands-on school vegetable gardening and nutrition education programs at high-poverty schools; and

Whereas, The promise of the 2008 federal farm bill will only be met if Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture follow through and continue to expand on the commitments made. Full funding, regulatory flexibility, and a cooperative and collaborative relationship with the states and local schools are needed to maintain the momentum; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That we urge the Congress of the United States and the U.S. Department of Agriculture to continue to promote and prioritize the establishment of local farm-to-school initiatives; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the members of the Michigan congressional delegation, and the Secretary of Agriculture.