How to Use this File:

This is the recommended case to read in the first affirmative constructive. I would recommend choosing between one of the advantages and not trying to read both (e.g. choose Small Farms or Food Justice, not both). If a student can read all of the cards in the 4-minute time frame, then absolutely read both advantages 😊. Students should read everything that is bolded and underlined (including the phrases that start with “Contention” and the numbers. If the header is “Contention \_\_\_\_\_ is”, you should insert the number based upon the order. So, if you read Inherency, Small Farms, and Solvency, they would be numbers Contention 1, 2, and 3 respectively. As a reminder, words in cards cannot be changed and students do NOT need to read the full citation (reading author and year is sufficient). If there are any questions, please let me know!

Stephanie

## Contention 1 is Inherency

#### 1. Rolling back school lunch regs now

The Hill 4 – 28 – 17

(USDA to ease school meal standards, <http://thehill.com/regulation/healthcare/331148-usda-to-ease-school-meal-standards>])

Newly minted Agriculture Secretary Sonny **Perdue is expected to unveil a new rule** Monday **aimed at** **giving schools more flexibility in meeting** federal nutrition **standards for school lunches**. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (**USDA**) **announced** Friday that Perdue and Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) will make the announcement at the Catoctin Elementary School in Leesburg, Va., where they are expected to eat lunch with the students. Republicans have long been trying to dial back the standards that became a pillar of former first lady Michelle Obama’s initiative to curb childhood obesity in the U.S. Roberts introduced legislation with Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) last year to give schools two more years to meet new reductions on sodium, but the bill never passed. Renewed efforts to ease the federal standards came as disappointing news to some advocates. **The American Heart Association was quick to push back**. In a statement, the group’s CEO, Nancy Brown, said the current standards are already working and that 99 percent of schools are in compliance. “Improving children’s health should be a top priority for the USDA, and serving more nutritious foods in schools is a clear-cut way to accomplish this goal,” she said. “Rather than altering the current path forward, we hope the agency focuses more on providing technical assistance that can help schools get across the finish line, if they haven’t done so already.”

### Contention \_\_\_\_ is Small Farms

#### 1. Organics are growing but need increased market demand --- even small shifts are key.

**Best**, Regular contributor to TakePart who has worked for Gourmet and the Natural Resources Defense Council, **16** (Jason Best, “Organic Farming in the U.S. Is Now Bigger Than Ever,” TakePart, http://www.takepart.com/article/2016/11/10/organic-crop-acreage/)

**More than 4 million acres of U.S. farmland now are devoted to organic agriculture**, according to a new report from the market research firm Mercaris, a record that marks an 11 percent increase over two years ago. The number of certified organic farms is close to 15,000, rising just over 6 percent since 2014. While it may not be shocking that hotbeds of consumer demand for organic food such as California and New York are among the leading states in the total acreage of organic farmland—with 688,000 acres, California is No. 1—Montana, Wisconsin, and North Dakota rounding out the top five is something of a surprise. Montana’s 30 percent increase of 100,000 acres of organic acreage since 2014 bumps it into the No. 2 spot, while North Dakota’s increase of more than 40,000 acres pushes it past Oregon, which now ranks sixth. Colorado and Texas round out the top eight. To be sure, **the amount of organic cropland in the U.S. remains but a sliver of the total overall**. Organic corn, wheat, and soybeans each account for less than 1 percent of the total number of acres planted with each crop. The largest organic crop, oats, accounts for 3.6 percent of all the oats grown in the U.S. **But double-digit growth in organic farmland is nothing to sniff at, and as you might expect, it’s a trend fueled by a consumer demand for organic products** that continues to boom. According to the Organic Trade Association, **sales of organic products grew almost 11 percent last year, the fourth straight year of double-digit growth**. **Compare that with the relatively meager growth rate of the market for food products overall** (3.3 percent in 2015), **and you can see why big food companies such as General Mills are committing themselves to expanding their organic offerings—which in turn is driving them to launch programs aimed at increasing the amount of organic farmland in the U.S**. “I think we will see more of an impact of those programs in the next few years as more farmers start the transition process [to organic],” Alex Heilman, sales associate at Mercaris, told Civil Eats. As more Americans make the switch to buying everything from organic eggs to organic cereal, it has created something of a paradox: The U.S. exports more grain for animal feed than any other country in the world, but because so many of our crops are conventionally grown—i.e., genetically modified and sprayed with pesticides—those same crops can’t be used in the production of organic food at home. Thus, the U.S. has been forced to import an increasing amount of organic feed from other countries. Imports of organic corn, for example, tripled over the last year, according to Bloomberg News, and it is primarily used as feed for dairy cows to help meet Americans’ demand for organic milk, which has tripled since 2007. In a week that has been consumed by election news and in a country trying to come to grips with Donald Trump’s upset win over Hillary Clinton, it can seem like small potatoes to go all rah-rah over a report that organic acreage has hit a record high in the U.S. **While there’s ample reason for progressive-minded folks who have been advocating for a more sustainable food supply to despair over** the sort of setbacks a **Trump** administration might pose—for example, cutting funding to the federal programs designed to help farmers make the transition to organic—it’s also worth remembering that we don’t just vote our conscience every two or four years at the polls; **in our market-based economy, we vote every day with our wallets**. Organics have long benefited from a kind of halo of healthy goodness. But **when it comes to promoting sustainable agriculture and its related environmental benefits, committing to buying organic when you can is one of the best things you can do**—whether we’re talking about avoiding GMOs or reining in the amount of toxic agrochemicals polluting our land and water. After all, **a company like General Mills isn’t getting ready to launch a program devoted to increasing the amount of organic farmland out of the goodness of its heart; it’s doing it because consumers are essentially calling for it every time they choose organic oatmeal over conventional. Small choices really can add up to big differences**.

#### 2. Healthy school lunch programs create markets for small farmers --- helps reverse industrialization and create sustainability.

**Joshi, Azuma, and Feenstra**, MS, Director of the National Farm to School Program, Center for Food & Justice, Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, Food Systems Analyst at the UC Sustainable Agriculture Research, and Education Program, University of California, Davis, **08** (Anupama Joshi, Andrea Misako Azuma**,** and Gail Feenstra, October 2008, “Do Farm-to-School Programs Make a Difference? Findings and Future Research Needs,” Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition, 3.2-3, 229-246.)

**Farm-to-school programs can be discussed in the larger context of** health and **environmental and agricultural crises** **that are** gaining public attention and **threatening the long-term sustainability of food systems**. Specifically, **recent changes** in the food system have **had impacts on** human health and **small and medium-size farm viability** and are addressed below.

**The prevalence of obesity** and overweight **has been elevated to a major public health concern** in the United States. Between 1999–2000 and 2003–2004, the prevalence of overweight rose from 13.8% to 16.0% among girls and from 14.0% to 18.2% among boys.6 Corresponding diet-related diseases, such as type 2 diabetes, are also increasing in prevalence7 and are of concern to health professionals and policymakers.

**A variety of school-based obesity prevention efforts have been implemented and evaluated with varying degrees of success in** **increasing students’ consumption of healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables**. Nutrition education programs have yielded slight increases in fruit and vegetable consumption among students, ranging from 0.2 to 0.99 servings/day.8,9 Research on salad bar offerings showed no significant difference in fruit and vegetable consumption between self-serve and preportioned salad bar meals. Researchers did find, however, that the greatest variety of items offered led to the greatest number of fruit and vegetable servings consumed.10 School gardens are another strategy for improving nutrition and educational outcomes in school settings, but scant research has been conducted to evaluate outcomes associated with gardening programs.11 There is evidence to suggest that teachers perceive gardens to be “somewhat to very effective at enhancing academic performance, physical activity, language arts, and healthful eating habits.”12 In comparing the impacts of classroom-based nutrition education and hands-on gardening activities, research conducted with fourth-graders documented a significant and lasting increase in knowledge and preference for vegetables among students who received nutrition education and those who participated in nutrition education combined with gardening, as compared to a control group.13

In addition to changes in health and weight status, **the agricultural industry has also undergone major changes** in recent decades, **as it has become increasingly marked by global competition and U.S. agricultural and trade policies that favor large farms**. **Small farms are experiencing hardships due to inaccessible markets**, cheap imports, and high packing and distribution costs per unit for small volumes.14 **According to the 2002 U.S. Census of Agriculture the number of small farms decreased about 4% between 1997 and 2002**. Farms with sales under $2,500 (the smallest category) and those over $500,000 (the largest farms) increased in number, but farms with sales in all categories between $2,500 to $499,999 decreased in number.15 This phenomenon has been called “the disappearing middle.” With changing conditions, **some small and medium-sized farms have sought alternative markets, such as farmers markets, cooperatives, and community-supported agriculture**. **Institutional markets are another venue for small and medium-sized farms, as the demand for local and sustainably produced food is increasing at schools**, colleges and universities, and hospitals **nationwide**.

#### 3. Genetic diversity from small farms key to prevent extinction.

**Boyce**, Department of Economics & Political Economy Research and Environmental research at the University of Massachusetts, **04** (James K. Boyce, July 2004, “A Future for Small Farms? Biodiversity and Sustainable Agriculture”. Political Economic Research Institute, <http://ideas.repec.org/p/uma/periwp/wp86.html>)

There is a future **for small farms**. Or, to be more precise, **there can** be **and should be a future** for them. **Given the dependence of ‘modern’ low-diversity agriculture on ‘traditional’ high-diversity agriculture, the long-term food security of humankind will depend on small farms and their continued provision of the environmental service of in situ conservation of crop genetic diversity**. **Policies to support small farms** can be advocated, therefore, not merely as a matter of sympathy, or nostalgia, or equity. Such policies **are** also **a matter of human survival**. The **diversity that underpins the sustainability of world agriculture** did not fall from the sky. It **was bequeathed to us by the 400 generations of farmers who have carried on the process of artificial selection** since plants were first domesticated. Until recently, **we took this diversity for granted**. The ancient reservoirs of crop genetic diversity, plant geneticist Jack Harlan (1975, p. 619) wrote three decades ago, ‘seemed to most people as inexhaustible as oil in Arabia.’ Yet, Harlan warned, ‘**the speed which enormous crop diversity can be essentially wiped out is astonishing**.’ The central thesis of this essay is that **efforts to conserve in situ diversity must go hand-in-hand with efforts to support the small farmers around the world who sustain this diversity**. Economists and environmentalists alike by and large have neglected this issue. In thrall to a myopic notion of efficiency, many economists fail to appreciate that **diversity is the sine qua non of resilience and sustainability**. In thrall to a romantic notion of ‘wilderness,’ many environmentalists fail to appreciate that agricultural biodiversity is just as valuable – indeed, arguably more valuable from the standpoint of human well-being – as the diversity found in tropical rainforests or the spotted owls found in the ancient forests of the northwestern United States.

### Contention \_\_\_\_\_ is Food Justice

#### 1. Poor federal standards are causing unhealthy children – these rates are uniquely high in poor and minority communities.

**U.C.S.**, Union of Concerned Scientists, **15** (Union of Concerned Scientists, Lessons from the Lunchroom: Childhood Obesity, School Lunch, and the Way to a Healthier Future (2015), http://www.ucsusa.org/food-agriculture/expand-healthy-food-access/lessons-lunchroom-childhood-obesity-school-lunch#.WQdxGdIrL4s)

**Children need healthy food**. This should go without saying, but **the current U.S. food system makes it** **hard to ensure that kids get the kinds of foods they need** **to grow into healthy adults. The average** U.S. **child eats only one-third of the fruits and vegetables recommended** by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. **This** problem **is especially acute for children from lower-income and** racial and ethnic **minority families.** **These children often lack adequate access to** fresh, **healthy food**, while unhealthy processed foods—made artificially cheap in part by federal subsidies—are readily available. Coupled with environmental factors, **this leads to a predictable result: high obesity rates**. The costs of childhood obesity **Obesity rates** among children nearly **tripled** between 1970 and 2000; **today approximately 16% of** American’s **youth are classified as obese.** **Obesity has disproportionately affected minority children,** especially in recent years: since 2000, the rise in obesity rates has leveled off for white children, but it continues to climb for African-American and Hispanic children. **Obese children are 10 times more likely than their peers to become obese adults**—**and adult obesity has serious health consequences,** including increased risk of type II diabetes, hypertension, and other chronic diseases. **These impacts not only mean shorter and less fulfilling lives for millions** of Americans; **they** also **carry a heavy price tag in health care costs**. **Childhood obesity also plays a key role in a cycle that can trap low-income children: poor health and missed school days result in lower academic achievement**, which leads to lower-paying jobs—and low incomes make it harder to maintain healthy lifestyles. The role of school lunch **Healthy school lunches can be a key factor in breaking this cycle by improving kids’ diets.** Children consume about half of their daily calories at school; for low-income children, **school lunch may be their only real meal of the day**. **And the foods kids eat at school influence their lifelong eating habits.** For decades, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has administered school meal programs that provide funding to support free and reduced-price (FRP) meals for students who meet income eligibility criteria. Meals offered under the program must meet nutritional standards. In recent decades, subsidized school meals had tilted toward processed foods high in fat, sugar, and sodium. In response to these trends, Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) of 2010, which required the USDA to update its standards for school meals to align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Schools began implementing these new standards in 2012. School lunch works—but it faces an uphill battle The report shows that **school lunch programs have a positive impact** on the eating habits of students. Fifth grade FRP meal participants ate fruits and vegetables 22.2 times per week on average, versus 18.9 times for non-FRP participants. While both groups ate fewer fruits and vegetables in eighth grade, FRP meal participants continued to eat them more often than their non-FRP peers (19.2 vs. 17.6 times per week). **Unfortunately, the positive impact of school food programs is not strong enough to overcome other unhealthy influences on children’s diet**. Our analysis found that FRP meal participants drank more sugary beverages and ate more fast food than their peers, and they were more likely to be obese—gaps that widened between 5th and 8th grade. **Stronger standards make a difference Starting in 2012, schools began to implement the stronger nutrition standards** mandated by HFFKA. While researchers are still in the early stages of evaluating the effectiveness of the updated standards, **the evidence so far is promising.** For example**, a 2014 Harvard School of Health study found that vegetable consumption increased by 16.2 percent in the first year of implementation** at four low-income schools. Other studies have shown that changes to the way healthy foods are presented and marketed in the cafeteria can have significant benefits.

Recommendations: Stronger school lunch policies have made a positive difference in children’s diets—and **Congress needs to build on these gains by improving those policies further.** The report has **several specific** **recommendations for Congress** as it renews the HHFKA in 2015: **Protect gains** made in 2010 **Increase** the federal meal **reimbursement** rate **Improve nutrition education Finance** school cafeteria **kitchen equipment** **Prioritize fruits and vegetables Increase funding for the Farm to School grant program** Not allow politics to trump science

#### 2. Fixing school lunches key to combat food injustice – access is harder for poor and minority students

**U.C.S.**, Union of Concerned Scientists, **15**

(Union of Concerned Scientists, Lessons from the Lunchroom: Childhood Obesity, School Lunch, and the Way to a Healthier Future (2015), http://www.ucsusa.org/food-agriculture/expand-healthy-food-access/lessons-lunchroom-childhood-obesity-school-lunch#.WQdxGdIrL4s)

**Policies to promote healthier food and farms must address the needs of marginalized communities The broken U.S. food system is a problem for all Americans**. **But** **like many of our national problems, it hits communities of color and low-income communities hardest** of all. **African-Americans, Latinos, and low-income Americans disproportionately lack access to healthy food**—and as a result, they are more likely to suffer from diet-related chronic diseases like diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease than the average American. They are also more likely to work at food system jobs that feature some of the lowest wages in our economy as well as unsafe and unhealthy working conditions. **These inequities are propped up by agricultural policies that promote the production and distribution of unhealthy processed foods** while putting obstacles in the way of making healthy food more available and affordable for everyone. **So fixing our food system is** not only a matter of health and sustainability—it’s also **a matter of justice.** Overcoming barriers to healthy food access. Recent research has confirmed what food activists and journalists have been saying for years: all Americans do not enjoy equal access to healthy food. **Inequities in food availability and affordability operate along both racial and income lines**, with low-income communities of color facing a double disadvantage. **The solution is not** as **simple** as “more supermarkets.” Transportation, affordability, and other food access barriers need to be overcome as well. Communities across America are coming up with innovative ways to meet these challenges locally, as profiled in our 2016 report Fixing Food: Fresh Solutions from Five U.S. Cities. **But local** governments and community **groups shouldn’t have to work so hard to overcome obstacles** **put in place by** the current system and the **federal policies** that drive it. We need a national food policy, coordinated across all relevant federal agencies, **aimed at promoting healthy food**, economic opportunity, **and** environmental **sustainability**. **As part of this effort, we need to ensure that the most reliable food source for many American children—the school cafeteria**—**can be counted on to serve healthy food to** nourish growing bodies and minds. **Childhood obesity**, a problem with serious, lifelong potential health consequences, **continues to grow at a faster pace for African American and Latino children than for the population as a whole**. **So maintaining high standards for healthy school food is also** a matter of food justice.

#### 3. Specifically food access racism contributes to overall racial inequalities – gets manifested in loss of life, health problems, and destroyed communities. Equal access to food should be a right not a privilege.

Meals, social worker, writer, JD from St. Mary’s, **12** (Kate Meals, Unearthing the Impact of Institutionalized Racism on Access to Healthy Food in Urban African-american Communities, St. Mary's Law Review on Race and Social Justice (2012), <http://racism.org/index.php/articles/basic-needs/povertywelfare/1593-accesstohealthyfood>)

A major reason **our food system is** so **damaged**--so **dominated by corporate interests, rife with unhealthy products, and unbalanced by unequal access**--is that we too often fail to consider food a social good or to understand that growing, selling, and eating food is by its nature a meaningful social act. What we eat is far more than a pile of commodities. Not only is **food**'s essential job to nourish our bodies, but it **can** also **serve as a creator of quality livelihoods**, a locus of **community engagement and** **cohesion, and an engine of citizen empowerment and education**. In recent decades, globalization and exponential population growth have pushed the boundaries of “economic, social, and ecological sustainability,” threatening global food security. In our modern age, rife with technological advances designed to make food production and distribution less labor intensive, widespread hunger and malnutrition diminish the “health and well-being of millions of people around the world.” **Despite the fact that it is fundamental to human survival, adequate access**  **to food is often regarded as if it were a privilege**, rather than a “basic human right.” **As the food crisis rages on, urban areas in** advanced industrialized countries such as **the United States are becoming concentrated zones of hunger and malnutrition**, despite the fact that the U.S. food supply is plentiful enough to feed every person in the country almost twice over, even accounting for exports. **In the United States today approximately thirty million people are unable to buy sufficient “food to maintain good health.”** A. Who are the Hungry? Although our country's food system crisis impacts the entire nation, **people of color bear a disproportionate brunt** of its harm. While this Comment pays particular attention to the present and historical structures impacting African-American communities, **inequality** **in** the production, acquisition, and **quality of food affects communities of color throughout the entire** **U**nited **S**tates. Research indicates that obesity, food security, and “food deserts” most negatively and disproportionately impact people of color and low-income individuals. Nationwide, 38.1 million people, or 12.4 percent of the population, identify as African-American (or Black). When compared with the U.S. population as whole, **African-Americans experience “hunger, poverty, unemployment, and income disparity” at disproportionate levels**. In 2010, rates of food insecurity in African-American households were higher than the national average, at 25.1 percent. In 2008, **27.2 percent of African-American families had difficulty getting enough to eat, compared with 11.6 percent in Caucasian households** overall. **Disparities in food consumption equate to disparities in health**. A recent study found that proximity to grocery stores was associated with lower rates of obesity. Healthier food is generally less available and more expensive in urban African-American neighborhoods. **One study found that African-Americas are almost four times more likely to live in food deserts than Whites.** In general, **the role of racism as an “organizing process in the food system” is evidenced by people of colors' disproportionate lack of access to healthy food,** unbalanced likelihood to lose their farms, and overrepresentation in the agricultural labor and food processing industries. Over the past decade, the United States has seen a dramatic increase in awareness of the state of our food supply, urban agriculture, and nutrition. Often missing from these discussions, however, is an understanding of food oppression's structural causes. Instead, the focus typically lies on personal responsibility and the need to bring in outside information to educate communities deemed to be suffering from hunger and health problems. Because many people who work to address food access are outsiders to urban communities of color, “**many** community organizations **remain unaware or closed to the ways racism works in the food system.” Such food organizations often overlook the histories of institutionalized racism when proposing “solutions**” or goals such as self-sufficiency. Funding needs often demand allegiance to organizations outside of the community and thus do not challenge the power structures that create racial disparities. **Throughout the United States, many low-income communities and communities of color face a daily food crisis**. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 17.2 million households were “food insecure” in 2010, and struggled to acquire adequate food due to lack of financial resources. In addition to facing food insecurity, **urban areas often exist in what are commonly called “food deserts” or grocery gaps, locales in which there are no grocery stores or other opportunities to purchase fresh, healthy food,** which typically co-exist with “food swamps,” areas which have a high prevalence of unhealthy food options, such as fast food and convenience stores. In a 2009 report to Congress, the USDA also found that “higher levels of racial segregation and greater income inequality” define urban areas. The USDA also found that close to six percent of all U.S. households lacked access to obtain the food they “wanted or needed,” and over half of these households also lacked sufficient financial resources for food. Research conducted in California illustrates these findings. In Los Angeles, a research study by Occidental College found upper-income areas had approximately three times as many supermarkets per capita as did low-income zip codes, and majority Caucasian zip codes had 3.17 times as many supermarkets than majority African-American zip codes. West Oakland, an area whose population numbers 30,000 and is 77 percent African-American, is home to fifty-three liquor stores, thirteen fast food retailers, and zero grocery stores. Even when there are grocery stores in urban communities of color, the produce is often of a lower quality and higher price than that of suburban supermarkets. Racial justice scholar Andrea **Freeman asserts that the damage done by lack of access to healthy food has a “pronounced and extreme effect on low-income people of color” which “represents a form of structural oppression that activists must incorporate into a struggle for racial and economic justice.” Structural food oppression undermines the well-being and very survival of low-income, urban communities of color**. **Since the food we consume so directly impacts our health, the negative impacts of lack of adequate nutrition and the stress of hunger permeate all other aspects of life**. **As expressed by one scholar, “[h]ealth is fundamental to every aspect of life,” and “without health, a student cannot do well in school; a worker cannot hold a job, much less excel at one; a family member cannot be an effective parent or spouse. Health crises and the staggering costs they impose are critical underlying causes of poverty, homelessness and bankruptcy**. **People of color who live in racially segregated neighborhoods are exposed to greater health risks**. African-Americans confined to segregated areas have historically experienced rising mortality rates due to overcrowding leading to disease and drug use. **These forms of structural racism are shaped heavily by government policies**. Such policies include providing public assistance that is insufficient to cover the cost of fresh food, drawing resources and services out of the cities, zoning and incentive policies that favor corporations over community-based businesses and urban farming, and government subsidies that facilitate saturation of urban communities and schools with fast food. This government-sponsored racial inequality tends to be obscured by the “distinction between public and private spheres of action and is perpetuated by the myth of personal choice, even where a lack of options and resources severely limits the ability to exercise choice.” In addition, marketing analysis used to determine where businesses choose to locate their stores systematically undervalues inner-city neighborhoods. Marketing firms generally rely on national data counts such as the U.S. Census, which often fail to accurately count city residents, especially people of color. One study of a mostly African-American and Latino area of Washington, D.C. undercounted the area residents by 55 percent. Market studies also generally use average household income rather than at total area income to determine an area's purchasing power, and thus underestimate available dollars within dense urban areas. In the United States, **policy discussions about food insecurity often ignore the histories of institutionalized racism that have caused widespread hunger and poverty, and instead tend to place the blame on the struggling communities.** These discussions also often overlook a particular “relativistic quality that has wormed its way into our food system over the past ten years.” As lower-income areas begin to make small improvements in access to healthy food, such as the addition of a grocery store or the slightly improved reach of the food stamp program, higher-income communities, by comparison, “leap ahead” with increases in their purchase of local and organic foods. The result is that, “as trends in consumption associated with lifestyle and health expand one class's universe of choice and perceived health benefits, a lower, less privileged class barely catches up to where the other class was in the last decade.” **Without an effective intervention, this gap is likely to continue its expansion**.

#### PLAN – The United States federal government should mandate and provide funding for Farm to School programs that significantly increase servings of fresh vegetables and fruits in secondary and elementary schools in the United States and make competitive food sales illegal.

#### Contention \_\_\_\_\_ is Solvency:

#### 1. Uniform federal policy is key – without federal funding struggling districts can’t incorporate nutrition education. Necessary to solve obesity and health issues – uniquely hurts poor and minority students and communities.

**U.C.S.,** Union of Concerned Scientists, **16** (School Lunch and Beyond: Better Food Policy for Healthier Kids, October 29, 2016, Last revised date: <http://www.ucsusa.org/food-agriculture/expand-healthy-food-access/school-lunch-and-beyond-better-food-policy-healthier-kids#.WQdvXtIrL4s>)

**Our children need**—and deserve—**healthy food**. **A diet** rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains, as **recommended by** the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and **nutrition experts,** **can help kids grow up** physically healthy, mentally alert, and **capable of meeting** the **challenges** of adulthood in the 21st century. **But in a food system dominated by unhealthy, artificially cheap processed foods, access to healthy food is a serious problem** for many American children. **As a result, childhood obesity has grown** **rapidly** over recent decades—**especially for** low-income and minority children—**with long-term health consequences that will shorten lives and** send health care costs soaring.In this grim food landscape, there’s one oasis for millions of kids: the school cafeteria. Why school lunch matters **The National School Lunch Program** (NSLP), created by Congress in 1946 and shaped by additional legislation over the following decades, **provides support**—mostly in the form of cash subsidies—**for schools to provide meals to students.** Partic**ipating schools must serve lunches that adhere to federal nutrition standar**ds, and they must offer free or reduced price (FRP) lunches to children who qualify. **For many students, NSLP meals are a crucial source of healthy foods** that their families may not have the access, money, or time to provide during the rest of the day. **The program also turns lunchtime into an opportunity for nutrition education:** by showing students what a healthy diet looks like, the school can provide a counterpoint to the steady stream of messages promoting unhealthy, processed foods to children and their parents. **In the** Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (**HHFKA**), **Congress improved the program’s nutritional standards**, **bringing them into better alignment with current federal dietary guidelines. Although there is considerable evidence that HHFKA is working, it has provoked a backlash from some** school nutrition professionals, who claim that it has resulted in increased waste and negative attitudes toward healthy food. The data are in: school lunch works To assess how well subsidized school lunches succeed at putting healthier food in kids’ mouths, **UCS analyzed data from a Department of Education study** that tracked the eating behavior of a cohort of students. The study surveyed the group as fifth graders in 2004 and again as eighth graders in 2007. **The resulting report, Lessons from the Lunchroom, shows that federally subsidized school lunches do make a difference**: **children who were FRP lunch recipients ate more fruits and vegetables than their peers who were not.** However, **the report also confirms the challenges that school lunch programs face in the larger food environment**: FRP students consumed more fast food and sugary drinks than non-FRP students, and they were more likely to be obese, a difference that increased between fifth and eighth grade. Give healthy food a chance: what Congress needs to do In 2015, the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act is up for renewal. **This is a crucial opportunity to strengthen what is working about current federal school lunch policy and to provide support for schools that have struggled** to implement HHFKA successfully. Our policy brief, Healthy School Meals, Healthy Children, offers **several specific recommendations that Congress should incorporate** into a renewed HHFKA—**including increased reimbursement funding, better nutrition education**, **investment in cafeteria equipment, and increased support for Farm to School programs.** Zooming out: the need for a national food policy **Ultimately, both the successes and the challenges of school lunch programs point us back to the bigger picture: the need for a comprehensive national food and well-being policy** **that will align food-related public policy initiatives around a consistent set of priorities**, **with the goal of ensuring access to healthy, sustainably grown food for every American**. UCS has begun working with a broad range of allies to build a movement that will make such a national food policy a reality.