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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Voters Ask Congress for Healthier School Lunches**

*Slow Food USA's Time for Lunch Campaign Exceeds 100,000 Letter/Signature Goal  
as Senate Begins Debate on School Lunch Reform*

BROOKLYN, New York – March 24, 2010 – Hours before the Senate began its first mark-up session on a bill to update the National School Lunch Program, Slow Food USA ([www.slowfoodusa.org](http://www.slowfoodusa.org)) surpassed its goal of sending 100,000 letters and petition signatures to Congress asking for healthier school food. This sudden boost in public support comes at the same time that Michelle Obama is talking about child obesity and health care costs are on the minds of many Americans.

“Ever since last Wednesday, when Senator Blanche Lincoln unveiled her version of the bill, we’ve seen an unprecedented burst of energy for this issue,” said Slow Food USA president Josh Viertel. “Parents want to know their kids are eating food that’s good for them. They want to know the vending machines aren’t selling junk food. They can see a future where their children have grown up to be healthy adults and where local farmers and local economies are productive and booming – and they’re asking Congress not to impede that future.”

This morning, the Senate Agriculture Committee is scheduled to hold its first mark-up session on the bill to reauthorize child nutrition programs. President Obama has proposed investing \$1 billion per year to improve program access and help schools serve healthier food, but Committee Chair Blanche Lincoln’s bill trims the proposal in half. Concerned parents are urging Senators on the Agriculture Committee to pass a strong School Lunch bill with at least a \$1 billion investment.

The Senators on the committee are:

Max Baucus (MT)	Amy Klobuchar (MN)
Michael Bennet (CO)	Mike Johanns (NE)
Sherrod Brown (OH)	Patrick Leahy (VT)
Robert Casey (PA)	Blanche Lincoln (AR)
Saxby Chambliss (GA)	Richard Lugar (IN)
Thad Cochran (MS)	Mitch McConnell (KY)
John Cornyn (TX)	Ben Nelson (NE)
Kirsten Gillibrand (NY)	Pat Roberts (KS)
Charles Grassley (IA)	Debbie Stabenow (MI)
Tom Harkin (IA)	John Thune (SD)

Funding for healthier school food would come from cuts to other items in the federal budget. Senator Lincoln has proposed cuts to conservation programs, which Slow Food USA does not support – particularly when a much larger portion of the budget goes to farm subsidy programs that support the over-production of the unhealthy processed foods that are fueling the obesity epidemic.

Parents can join the effort by using a form on Slow Food USA's Time for Lunch campaign web site ([www.slowfoodusa.org/timeforlunch](http://www.slowfoodusa.org/timeforlunch)) to email legislators.

### **About Slow Food USA**

Slow Food USA is a non-profit organization working to create a just and sustainable food system. Slow Food USA has 225 volunteer-led chapters across the country, representing more than 150,000 members and advocates. The organization creates youth programs to bring the values of eating local, sustainable and just food to schools and campuses; preserves and promotes vanishing foods and food traditions; and advocates for food and farming policy that is good for the public, good for farmers and workers, and good for the planet.

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