

Senate Resolution 886

By: Senators Chance of the 16th, Rogers of the 21st, Douglas of the 17th and Staton of the 18th

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the United States Congress and Georgia state agencies to increase the nutritional
2 quality and options provided to students through school meals; and for other purposes.

3 WHEREAS, all children are entitled to a healthy school meal each day in compliance with
4 the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Program; and

5 WHEREAS, a disproportionate rise in poor health indicators, including obesity, risk for heart
6 disease, diagnoses of cancer, and adult onset diabetes, are linked to diet, and a significant
7 percentage of children who rely on free and reduced-price school meals are considered at risk
8 for these diet related degenerative diseases; and

9 WHEREAS, recent studies indicate that almost one of three American children are
10 overweight or obese and are therefore at higher risk of developing these health problems; and

11 WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Cancer Society, the
12 American Dietetic Association, the American Diabetes Association, the American Heart
13 Association, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the National Institutes of
14 Health recommend a greater emphasis in the American diet on fruits, vegetables, whole
15 grains, and legumes, which contain fiber and essential nutrients, including vitamins and
16 minerals, are low in fat and calories, and contain no cholesterol; and

17 WHEREAS, according to the USDA's Team Nutrition program, the percentage of children
18 who eat the minimum daily recommended servings of fruit is less than 15 and vegetables is
19 only 17, while the percentage of children who eat no fruit in a given day is 35 percent and
20 no vegetables is 20 percent; and

21 WHEREAS, exposure to plant-based entrees in the school cafeteria would positively
22 influence children; and

23 WHEREAS, at the same time, school children who practice a plant-based diet or are from
24 families who avoid meat or dairy may be at a disadvantage if school lunches are not offered
25 that meet their personal dietary standards; and

26 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture 1995 School Meals Initiative
27 suggests that, whenever possible, school lunch programs should offer a selection of menu
28 items and foods from which pupils may make choices in order to provide variety and
29 encourage consumption and participation.

30 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE that the members of this body
31 urge the United States Congress to include plant-based meals and nondairy healthful
32 beverage alternatives as an option for all students as part of the Richard B. Russell National
33 School Lunch Program.

34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body urge the United States
35 Congress to require the USDA to make available a greater variety of fresh and frozen
36 produce, legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds through the commodities program.

37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of this body encourage state agencies,
38 including the Department of Community Health, the Department of Agriculture, the
39 Department of Education, and the Georgia School Food Services, to develop nutritionally
40 sound school meal menus that provide optional plant-based meals and nondairy healthful
41 beverage alternatives in such a way that all students will be assured nutritionally balanced
42 diets, regardless of food preferences and avoidances.