

# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:  
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For More Information Contact:  
Gary Ruskin (503) 235-8012

## **Childhood Obesity Prevention Campaign Launched**

Today, the non-profit organization Commercial Alert, backed by dozens of endorsing organizations and prominent scholars, started a campaign to help stop the childhood obesity epidemic by banning the marketing, distribution and sale of junk food in schools, and improving the quality of food provided to schoolchildren.

The childhood obesity prevention agenda was endorsed by leading authors, scientists and obesity experts from Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Stanford, Yale and other major research institutions, along with the American College of Preventive Medicine, Center for a New American Dream, Center for Food and Justice, Center for Media Education, Center for Science in the Public Interest, Connecticut Public Health Association, Eagle Forum, Green Party of the United States, Maryland Public Health Association, Massachusetts Public Health Association, Michigan Public Health Association, New Mexico Public Health Association, Organic Consumers Association, Science and Environmental Health Network, Stonyfield Farms and the Yale Prevention Research Center.

Other prominent endorsers include: Lawrence Cheskin (Director, Johns Hopkins Weight Management Center); Greg Critser (author, *Fat Land*); Frances Moore Lappe (author, *Diet for a Small Planet*); Marion Nestle (author, *Food Politics*); Peggy O'Mara (Publisher, *Mothering Magazine*); Alvin Poussaint (Harvard Medical School); Raffi (children's troubadour); Ellen Ruppel Shell (author, *The Hungry Gene*); Walter Willett (Harvard School of Public Health).

Commercial Alert sent the childhood obesity prevention agenda today to chairs and ranking members of state legislative education committees, and the chief state public health and education officers in all 50 states, and encouraged them to act upon it.

The childhood obesity prevention agenda follows.

### **Childhood Obesity Prevention Agenda for States, Municipalities and School Boards**

American children are suffering from an epidemic of obesity. In spite of this, purveyors of junk food increasingly are able to use public schools as a platform for their marketing campaigns. In effect, the junk food lobby has latched onto the compulsory school laws as a way to corral a captive audience of impressionable children.

Parents should guide the eating habits of their kids. Corporations have no business wedging into that relationship. Schools should support parents in this.

We are what we eat, as the old saying goes; and in this the schools play an important part, for good or ill. Schools should encourage healthful eating habits and exercise. They should not become marketing zones and shopping centers in which junk food manufacturers get open access to impressionable children.

**WE CALL ON STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN BY PROHIBITING THE MARKETING AND SALE OF JUNK FOOD IN SCHOOLS.**

*Schools should help parents promote good nutrition, rather than support junk food companies that promote products high in added sugar and fat.*

1. States, municipalities and school boards should prohibit the marketing of junk food on school property.
  - Prohibit contracts that obligate children to watch or listen to ads for junk food on school property. An example is Channel One, an in-school TV marketing program.
  - Prohibit display of visual advertisements for junk food in school, such as billboards, signs, posters, and logo placements.
  - Prohibit the use of corporate-sponsored curricula featuring or promoting junk food products.
  - Prohibit exclusive marketing (“pouring rights”) contracts between soda beverage companies and school districts, school food service agencies and school groups.

*Schools should make healthful food available to children.*

2. **States, municipalities and school boards should ban the sale or distribution of junk food on school property.**
  - Prohibit sale of junk food on school property, including, but not limited to, a la carte, before-school or after-school programs, concession stands or vending machines.
  - Prohibit the distribution of junk food as a reward or prize for good behavior or exemplary performance.
  - Prohibit distribution of free samples of junk food on school property.
  - Amend Unfair and Deceptive Acts and Practices statutes and ordinances to prohibit marketing of junk food to children on school property.

*Schools should be rewarded for exceeding federal nutrition standards.*

**3. States, municipalities and school boards should provide financial rewards to school districts, schools and food service agencies that exceed federal nutrition guidelines and obey restrictions on the sale of junk food in schools.**

School districts and school food service agencies should exceed the nutritional standards of the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, especially by providing plenty of whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, fat-free dairy products, local and organic products, but no foods with hydrogenated vegetable shortening, and few or no fried foods.

School districts and school food service agencies must strictly comply with the federal competitive foods rule.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have defined junk food as “foods which provide calories primarily through fats or added sugars and have minimal amounts of vitamins and minerals.”

<----agenda ends here----->

Following is a complete list of endorsers of the childhood obesity prevention agenda.

Individuals

Kären Ahern, Director, Coalition for Environmentally Safe Schools

Enola G. Aird, Director, The Motherhood Project, Institute for American Values

Peter Barnes, co-founder, Working Assets

Brian Burt, Professor, Department of Epidemiology; Director, Program in Dental Public Health;  
Professor, School of Dentistry, University of Michigan

Nancy Carlsson-Paige, EdD, Professor of Child Development, Lesley University

Jason Catlett, President, Junkbusters Corporation

Lawrence J. Cheskin, MD, FACP, Director, Johns Hopkins Weight Management Center;  
Associate Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Greg Critser, author, *Fat Land: How Americans Became the Fattest People in the World*

Catherine Cubbin, PhD, Research Associate, Stanford Center for Research in Disease  
Prevention, Stanford University School of Medicine; Assistant Research Scientist,  
Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of California, San Francisco

Donald R. Davis, PhD, Research Associate in Nutrition, Biochemical Institute, University of  
Texas

Nancy M. DiMarco, PhD, RD, LD, Professor, Nutrition and Food Sciences, Nutrition  
Coordinator, Institute for Women's Health, Texas Woman's University

Cara B. Ebbeling, PhD, Research Associate, Children's Hospital, Boston; Instructor in Pediatrics,  
Harvard Medical School

Leon Eisenberg, MD Professor of Social Medicine and Psychiatry Emeritus, Harvard Medical  
School

Roy F. Fox, Professor and Chair, Department of Learning, Teaching, & Curriculum, University  
of Missouri-Columbia; author, *Harvesting Minds* and *MediaSpeak*

Erica Frank, MD, MPH, Vice Chair and Associate Professor; Director, Preventive Medicine  
Residency Program, Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, Emory University

School of Medicine; President, Atlanta Chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Gilbert Fuld, MD, pediatrician, Past President, New Hampshire Pediatric Society, former member, Board of Directors, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Linda C. Fuller, Co-founder, Habitat for Humanity International  
Christopher D. Gardner, PhD, Assistant Professor, Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention, Stanford University School of Medicine  
Gary Goldbaum, MD, MPH, Associate Professor, Department of Epidemiology, University of Washington  
Michael I. Goran, PhD, Professor of Preventive Medicine and Physiology and Biophysics, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California; Associate Director, USC Institute for Prevention Research  
Gerald Hass, MD, FAAP, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School; Physician in Chief, South End Community Health Center, Boston, MA  
Timothy K. Kasser, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Knox College  
David L. Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, Associate Clinical Professor of Public Health & Medicine, Yale University School of Medicine; Director, Yale Prevention Research Center  
Michael Kieschnick, President, Working Assets  
Jean Kilbourne, author, *Can't Buy Me Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think And Feel*  
Rebecca T. Kirkland, MD, MPH, Chief, Academic General Pediatrics, Baylor College of Medicine  
Ronald M. Krauss, MD, Director, Atherosclerosis Research, Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute; Adjunct Professor, Department of Nutritional Sciences, University of California, Berkeley  
Velma LaPoint, Associate Professor of Child Development, School of Education, Howard University  
Frances Moore Lappe, author, *Diet for a Small Planet*, co-author, *Hope's Edge*  
Diane Levin, Professor of Education, Wheelock College, author, *Remote Control Childhood*  
Jane Levine, co-founder, Kids Can Make A Difference  
Susan Linn, Instructor in Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; Associate Director, Media Center Judge Baker Children's Center  
Robert McChesney, Research Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; author, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*  
Mary Anne Mercer, DrPH, Senior Lecturer, University of Washington School of Public Health  
Mark Crispin Miller, Professor of Media Ecology, New York University  
Alex Molnar, Professor of Education Policy, Director, Education Policy Studies Laboratory, Arizona State University  
Diane Morrison, Research Professor, School of Social Work, University of Washington  
Robert K. Musil, PhD, MPH, Executive Director and CEO, Physicians for Social Responsibility  
Marion Nestle, PhD, MPH, Professor and Chair, Department of Nutrition and Food Studies, New York University; author, *Food Politics* and *Safe Food*  
Peggy O'Mara, Editor and Publisher, *Mothering Magazine*  
Mark A. Pereira, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School, Children's Hospital, Division of Endocrinology  
Harold Pollack, PhD, Associate Professor of Health Management and Policy, University of Michigan School of Public Health

Alvin F. Poussaint, MD, Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; Director, Media Center of the Judge Baker Children's Center  
Raffi, children's troubadour, author, founder of Child Honoring  
Eric Rimm, ScD, Associate Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health  
Vicki Robin, co-author, *Your Money or Your Life*  
Ellen Ruppel Shell, Associate Professor and Co-director, Knight Center for Science and Medical Journalism, Boston University; author, *The Hungry Gene: The Science of Fat and the Future of Thin*  
Inger Stole, Assistant Professor, Department of Advertising, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
Mary Story, PhD, RD, Professor, Division of Epidemiology, Associate Dean of Student Affairs School of Public Health, University of Minnesota  
Victor Strasburger, MD, Professor of Pediatrics, Chief, Division of Adolescent Medicine, University of New Mexico School of Medicine; co-author, *Children, Adolescents, & the Media*  
Michael Traub, ND, President, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians  
V. Susan Villani, MD, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins Medical School  
Walter Willett, MD, DrPH, Chair, Department of Nutrition, Harvard School of Public Health  
Marilyn A. Winkleby, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor of Medicine, Stanford Center for Research in Disease Prevention, Stanford University School of Medicine

#### Organizations

American College of Preventive Medicine  
Center for a New American Dream  
Center for Food and Justice  
Center for Media Education  
Center for Science in the Public Interest  
Citizens Campaign for Commercial-Free Schools  
Connecticut Public Health Association  
Commercial Alert  
Dads and Daughters  
Eagle Forum  
Green Party of the United States  
Maryland Public Health Association  
Massachusetts Public Health Association  
Michigan Public Health Association  
New Mexico Media Literacy Project  
New Mexico Public Health Association  
Obligation, Inc.  
Organic Consumers Association  
Science and Environmental Health Network  
South End Community Health Center, Boston, MA  
Washington State Pediatric Nutrition Practice Group  
Yale Prevention Research Center

## Others

Marsha Burger, co-founder, Sunergia Soyfoods, Charlottesville, VA

Gary Flanagan, President, Shelton's Poultry Inc., Pomona, CA

Michael Girkout, President, Alvarado Street Bakery, Rohnert Park, CA

Honest Tea

Rona N. James, Natural Gourmet, Inc., Austin, TX

Dal LaMagna, CEO and Founder, Tweezerman Corporation, Glen Cove, NY

Julie Mayfield, Owner, NatJulie Great Products, Lacey, WA

Lila Murray, Co-owner, White Mountain Foods

Gregor Robertson, President, Happy Planet Foods

Stonyfield Farms

TerrEssentials, Middletown, MD

Tumaro's Gourmet Tortillas and Snacks, Los Angeles, CA

Visionary Health Concepts Inc.

<-----endorsers end here----->

For more information, read Commercial Alert's fact sheet on childhood obesity and the marketing of junk food in schools <<http://www.commercialalert.org/obesity.pdf>> and Web pages on childhood obesity

<[http://www.commercialalert.org/index.php/category\\_id/5/subcategory\\_id/72/article\\_id/176](http://www.commercialalert.org/index.php/category_id/5/subcategory_id/72/article_id/176)> and commercialism in schools

<[http://www.commercialalert.org/index.php/category\\_id/2/subcategory\\_id/54/article\\_id/103/](http://www.commercialalert.org/index.php/category_id/2/subcategory_id/54/article_id/103/)>.

Commercial Alert is a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to keep the commercial culture within its proper sphere, and to prevent it from exploiting children and subverting the higher values of family, community, environmental integrity and democracy.

Commercial Alert has more than 2000 members, representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.commercialalert.org>.