

Dannel P. Malloy

GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

June 12, 2014

The Honorable Denise Merrill
Secretary of State
30 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Madam Secretary:

I hereby return, without my signature, substitute House Bill 5566, *An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes*. There is much in this bill that I support, and I look forward to working with the legislature to enact the bill's many sound provisions into law. However, I cannot support section 8, which potentially prohibits the sale of nonfat chocolate milk in our public schools.

The section at issue is well-intentioned and with some minor changes I would be fully supportive. However, as written, the section prohibits the sale of nonfat milk containing any "added sodium." Unfortunately, all milk producers that sell milk to our public schools add some sodium to their nonfat chocolate milk product to counteract the bitterness caused by adding cocoa to the milk.

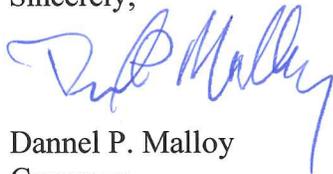
The provision related to sodium was intended to contribute to a sensible effort to reduce the amount of sodium consumed by our students, as required by federal law. Excessive consumption of sodium is a contributing factor to the high rate of heart disease in our country, and it may be wise to cap the sodium levels in milk offered in our schools. But an outright ban on added sodium is not workable.

Ideally, students will choose to drink unflavored nonfat milk. Chocolate milk contains unnecessary calories, sugar, as well as sodium. Dietary guidelines for Americans recommend that children consume three servings of nonfat or low fat dairy a day in order to ensure that they are getting the amount of calcium needed during these critical bone developing years. Research shows, however, that when chocolate milk is removed as an option, total milk consumption goes down and milk waste increases, presumably because students who do not like the taste of unflavored milk throw it away. On balance, health professionals are largely in agreement that for these reasons chocolate milk should remain an option in our schools, though children should be encouraged to try unflavored milk.

I am not opposed to individual school districts having the choice to eliminate the sale of chocolate milk in their schools. However, I do not think it is a wise policy to mandate state-wide.

For these reasons, I disapprove of substitute House Bill 5566, *An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes*. Pursuant to Section 15 of Article Fourth of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, I am returning substitute House Bill 5566 without my signature.

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor