



## ***Cruz: Pursue new Federal law before raising meal prices***

(December 17, 2010 – Hagåtña, Guam) President Obama signed into law the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, making the \$4.5 billion investment the first of its kind in 30 years. The law is aimed at fighting childhood obesity, and provides resources to help make Federal meal programs more nutritious.

In a letter to Superintendent Nerissa Bretania Underwood, Vice-Speaker Benjamin J.F. Cruz re-emphasized his concern about childhood obesity among Guam's school children, and the need for the Guam Department of Education to be proactive and fiscally responsible by competing for any grants or performance based incentive programs provided to Guam in the new law.

The Vice-Speaker also questions increases in school meal prices, especially as the new law potentially provides DOE with additional funds to supplement meal costs.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 recognizes using updated nutrition guidelines, standards, and additional regulation, and provides additional funding for school districts that comply and participate accordingly.

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For more information, call the Office of Vice Speaker Benjamin J.F. Cruz at 477-2521. Vice Speaker Cruz is available also via email at [senadotbjcruz@gmail.com](mailto:senadotbjcruz@gmail.com).



December 17, 2010

Dr. Nerissa Bretania Underwood  
Superintendent  
Department of Education  
P.O. Box DE  
Hagåtña, Guam 96932  
Fax: (671) 472-5003

**Re: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act**

Dear Dr. Underwood:

President Obama signed into law, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act which provides \$4.5 billion to help the fight against hunger and obesity among our nation's school children. I have been following this legislation closely, particularly for the direct impact it may have on Guam's school children and the proposed increase in school meals.

I have written letters to you about my concern regarding the quality and nutritional value of food being served in the Guam public school system and the cost analysis between Federal reimbursements per meal versus the cost to the Department to provide each meal.

Childhood obesity is a national epidemic, and is certainly a problem on Guam. The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act would provide and allow performance based incentives to provide additional reimbursements to those schools who meet nutrition standards outlined in the law. The law recognizes a need for regulation of meal nutrition standards and that all foods served to school children are consistent with the most recent U.S. Dietary Guidelines. If Guam is eligible for these performance based incentives, it would be in our interest to compete for these funds. The new law also allocates funding for school gardens and farm-to-school programs where local farmers and schools can partner in order to provide healthy meals.

I am also interested in how the Department will seek out ways to reduce administrative costs in regards to the school meal program, especially since the new law recognizes school districts that are dense with low income families, like Guam, and will give reimbursements in order to feed more school children. It is my hope that all Federal funding opportunities be pursued before raising the cost of school meal prices. I look forward to your response.

Thank you for your time and kind consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benjamin J. F. Cruz".

Benjamin J. F. Cruz