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3 **Title:** Reallocation of Agricultural Subsidies to Fight Childhood
4 Obesity

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6 **Introduced by:** Brian Rutledge for the Medical Student Section
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9 Hussain

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11 **Referred to:** Reference Committee D
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13 **House Action:**
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16 **Whereas, obesity is considered by the WHO to be one the most important**
17 **public health issues of this century due to its prevalence and association with**
18 **developing other diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular diseasesⁱ, and**
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20 **Whereas the Michigan State Medical Society has joined the Healthy Kids**
21 **Healthy Michigan coalition to proactively curb childhood obesity in Michigan as**
22 **a way to lower the significant healthcare costs of pediatric obesityⁱⁱ, and**
23

24 **Whereas, the Journal of American Medical Association estimates that the**
25 **prevalence for overweight and obesity, combined, were over two-thirds of the**
26 **population as of 2008, concurring with the National Health and Nutrition**
27 **Examination Survey findings that there has been a statistically significant**
28 **increase in the prevalence of obesity over the past thirty yearsⁱⁱⁱ, and**
29

30 **Whereas, the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourages**
31 **Americans to consume more healthy foods like vegetables, fruits, whole grains,**
32 **fat free and low fat dairy products, and seafood, and to consume less sodium,**
33 **saturated and trans fats, added sugars, and refined grains^{iv}, and**
34

35 **Whereas, the USDA states the average American diet falls short of the**
36 **past and current recommendations for fruit, vegetables, milk, milk products and**
37 **whole grains, and exceeds the guidelines for the intake of grains and meat. The**
38 **Economic Research Service reports show that current domestic fruit and**
39 **vegetable production are inadequate to meet demand were Americans to follow**
40 **dietary guidelines^v, and**
41

42 **Whereas, agricultural subsidy programs stimulate production of**
43 **government-favored commodities by raising incentives to use scarce land and**
44 **farmer talent on some products rather than on others^{vi}. Specifically, the U.S.**
45 **government provides subsidies of approximately \$20 billion annually to**
46 **producers of grains, oil seeds, cotton, sugar, and dairy products, but limited**
47 **support for producers of fruits and vegetables^{vii}, and**
48

49 **Whereas, the relative cost of subsidized products, such as carbonated**
50 **beverages and other foods high in fats, oils and sugars, declined over the last**
51 **25 years while the price of fresh fruits and vegetables increased by 50% over**
52 **the same period of time^{viii}, and**

53
54 **Whereas, a recent study by the USDA estimated that a 10-percent**
55 **subsidy increase in fruits and vegetables, from what was allocated by the Food,**
56 **Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, would encourage low income Americans**
57 **to increase their consumption of fruits by 2.1-5.2 percent and vegetables by 2.1-**
58 **4.9 percent^{ix}; therefore be it**

59
60 **RESOLVED: That our MSMS advocate for an increase in the proportion**
61 **of agricultural subsidies given to nutritionally valuable foods as defined by the**
62 **Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 in support of the USDA's**
63 **guidelines for a healthy national diet and the goals of the Healthy Kids Healthy**
64 **Michigan coalition.**

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66 **RESOLVED: That our MSMS support educational initiatives such as**
67 **Healthy Kids Healthy Michigan to address the goal of preventing child obesity,**
68 **and further promote healthy foods and activities.**

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71 **WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE FISCAL NOTE: NONE**

ⁱ Child Overweight and Obesity on the Rise. World Health Organization.
<http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/childhood/en/> Accessed March 10, 2011.

ⁱⁱ Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Rolls out 2011 Plan to Curb Childhood Obesity.
http://www.msms.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Public_Health_Issues&CONTENTID=17247&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm Posted February 11, 2011. Accessed March 10, 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ Flegal KM, Carroll MD, Ogden CL, Curtin LR. Prevalence and Trends in Obesity Among US Adults, 1999-2008. JAMA 2010; 303(3): 235-41.

^{iv} USDA and HHS Announce New Dietary Guidelines to Help Americans Make Healthier Food Choices and Confront Obesity Epidemic. United States Department of Agriculture Press Release. January 31, 2011.

^v Buzby JC and Wells HF. Meeting Fruit and Vegetable Dietary Recommendations Will Impact Agriculture. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. AmberWaves. April 2007.

^{vi} Sumner DA. Agricultural Subsidy Programs. The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics. Accessed March 10, 2011.

^{vii} Environmental Working Group Farm Subsidy Database. <http://farm.ewg.org/> Accessed March 10, 2011.

^{viii} Ludwig DS, Pollack HA. Obesity and the Economy: From Crisis to Opportunity. JAMA 2009;301(5):533-535.

^{ix} Dong D, Lin B. Fruit and Vegetable Consumption by Low-Income Americans: Would a Price Reduction Make a Difference? United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. Economic Research Report Number 70. January 2009.