

Michelle Obama assails plan to lower school lunch standards

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Michelle Obama lashed out in a newspaper opinion piece Thursday against Republican plans to roll back recently improved nutrition standards in American schools, one of her cherished causes as US first lady.

Obama wrote in the New York Times that revamped school [nutrition standards](#) requiring less salt, sugar and fat in meals served at school have helped reverse the obesity trend among US [school children](#).

But she said those inroads have been put at risk by members of the Republican-dominated House of Representatives, who, for budgetary reasons, have proposed exempting some school districts from the tougher food standards.

"Unfortunately, we're now seeing attempts in Congress to undo so much of what we've accomplished on behalf of our children," Obama wrote in the Times.

In 2010, President Barack Obama signed a law boosting school lunch standards on the regulations, following recommendations from the National Academy of Sciences.

The effect of rolling back the standards, the first lady wrote, would be to "lower the quality of food our kids get in school."

"They want to make it optional, not mandatory, for schools to serve

fruits and vegetables to our kids. They also want to allow more sodium and fewer whole grains than recommended into school lunches," said Obama, who also slammed proposed relaxed standards for a federal nutrition program for low-income women and their young children.

The first lady said the changes would be up for discussion on Thursday when the House Appropriations Committee takes up the annual spending bill for the Agriculture Department.

Obama has made combatting [childhood obesity](#) one of her main causes during her tenure as first lady, including planting a vegetable garden on the grounds of the White House and stressing the importance of exercise for kids with her "Let's Move" program.

She wrote in the Times that despite recent progress combatting youth obesity, one in three children in the United States is still overweight, and a similar percentage of kids is expected to develop diabetes during his or her lifetime.

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