



HEALTHY, HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT CASE STUDY: HISTORY AND INSIGHTS FOR ADVOCACY



What are the school meals programs?



- National School Lunch Program: nearly half of all children in the U.S. (more than 30 million).
- School Breakfast Program: more than 14 million children.
- Taxpayer investment in both programs over \$16 billion in FY2019.
- Meals, snacks, beverages must meet nutrition standards
- Every 5 years Congress takes up Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR)

Importance of strong school nutrition standards for low-income children



- Helps close the gap in healthier food access between higher and lower-income schools
- Helps reduce stigma
- Decreases obesity among low-income students

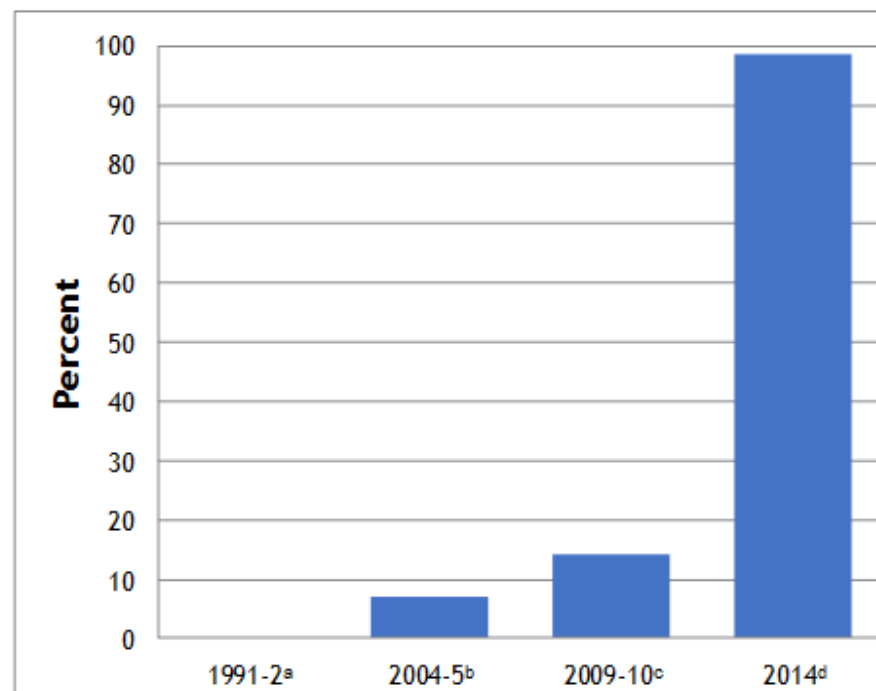
- The majority of participants are low-income
 - School lunch: 73%
 - School breakfast: 85%
- Participation is increasing among low-income children
 - School lunch: 15.5m in 2000 to 22m in 2017
 - School breakfast: 7.5m in 2000 to 12.4m in 2017



How are things going?

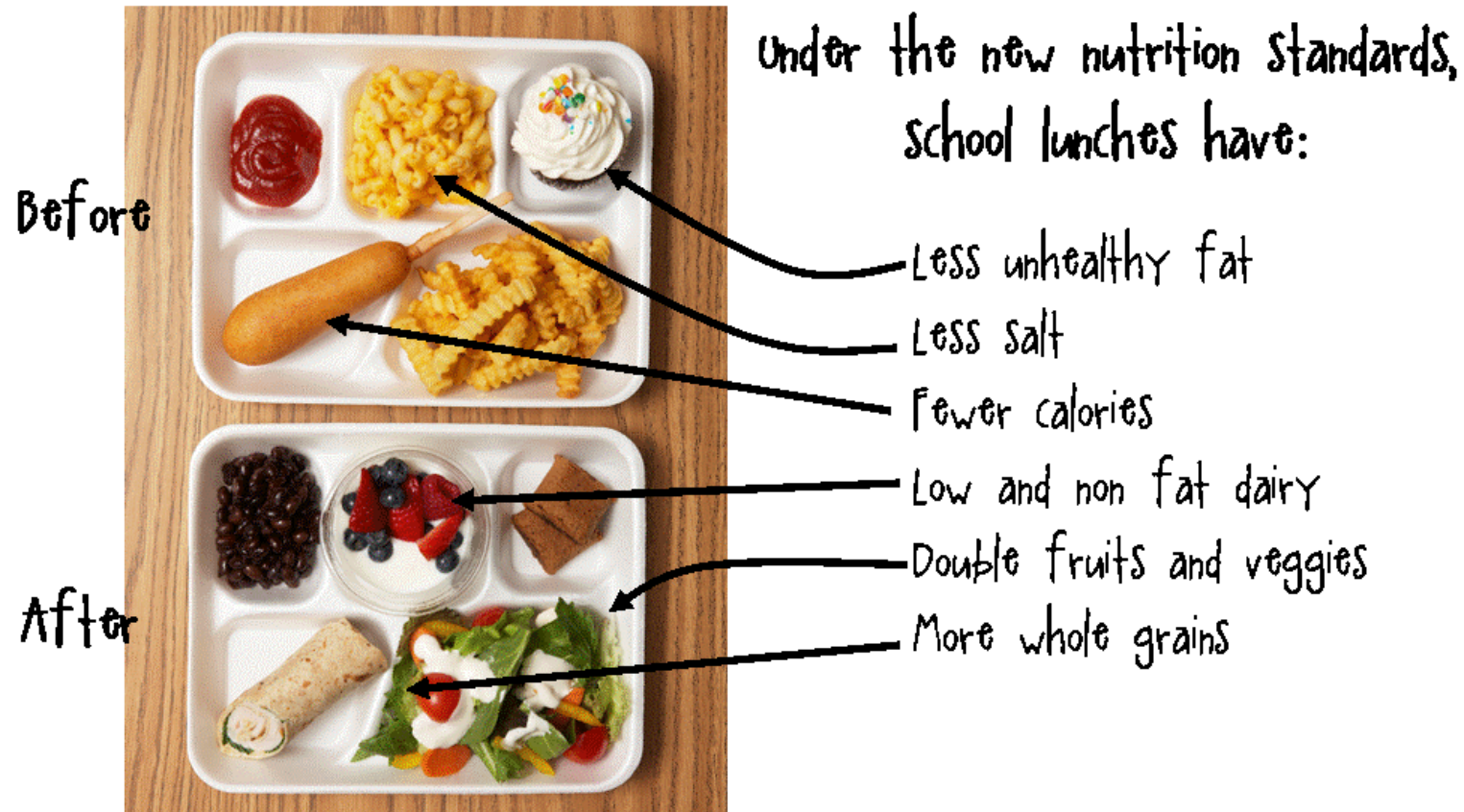
Virtually all school districts serving healthier lunches with more whole grains, fruits and vegetables, less salt and *trans* fat.

Schools Meeting School Lunch Standards



- a. School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study (SNDA)
- b. SNDA II
- c. SNDA IV
- d. USDA 6-cent certification data for school districts

The School Day Just Got Healthier!



Before the New Standards



286
TOTAL
CALORIES

**Chocolate
Sandwich
Cookies**
(6 medium)

182

Empty
Calories



249
TOTAL
CALORIES

**Fruit
Flavored
Candies**
(2.2 oz. pkg.)

177

Empty
Calories

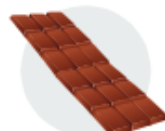


242
TOTAL
CALORIES

Donut
(1 large)

147

Empty
Calories



235
TOTAL
CALORIES

**Chocolate
Bar**
(1 bar-1.6 oz.)

112

Empty
Calories



136
TOTAL
CALORIES

**Regular
Cola**
(12 fl. oz.)

126

Empty
Calories

After the New Standards



170
TOTAL
CALORIES

Peanuts
(1 oz.)

0

Empty
Calories



161
TOTAL
CALORIES

**Light
Popcorn**
(Snack bag)

17

Empty
Calories



118
TOTAL
CALORIES

**Low-Fat
Tortilla
Chips**
(1 oz.)

0

Empty
Calories



95
TOTAL
CALORIES

**Granola
Bar (oats,
fruit, nuts)**
(1 bar-.8 oz.)

32

Empty
Calories



68
TOTAL
CALORIES

**Fruit Cup
(w/100%
Juice)**
(Snack cup
4 oz.)

0

Empty
Calories



0
TOTAL
CALORIES

**No-Calorie
flavored
Water**
(12 fl. oz.)

0

Empty
Calories

Impact of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act

Updated school meal and snack standards: prevent more than 2 million cases of childhood obesity and save \$792 million over ten years.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act is “one of the most important national obesity prevention policy achievements in recent decades.”

- Harvard School of Public Health, 2015

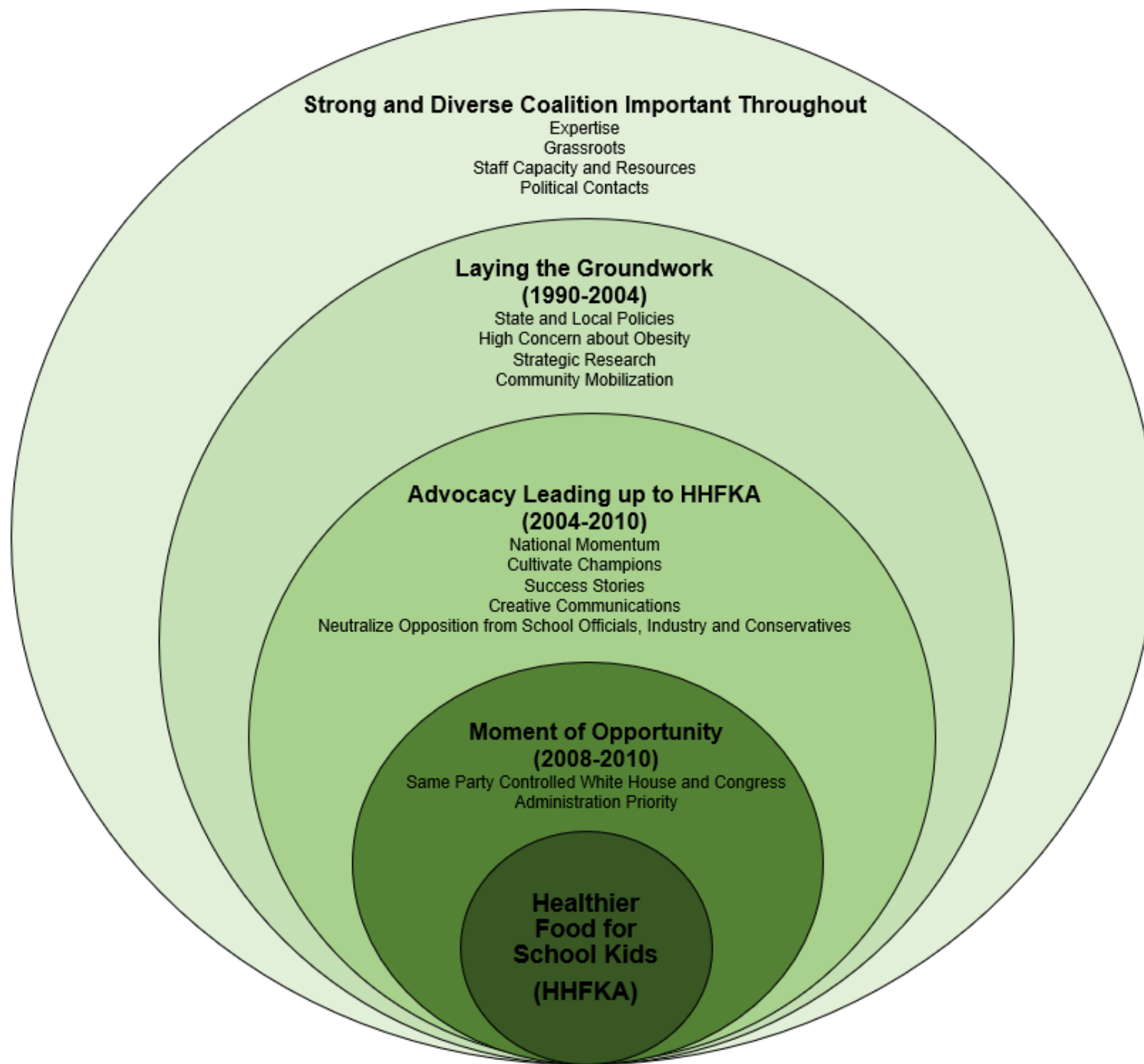
Research questions

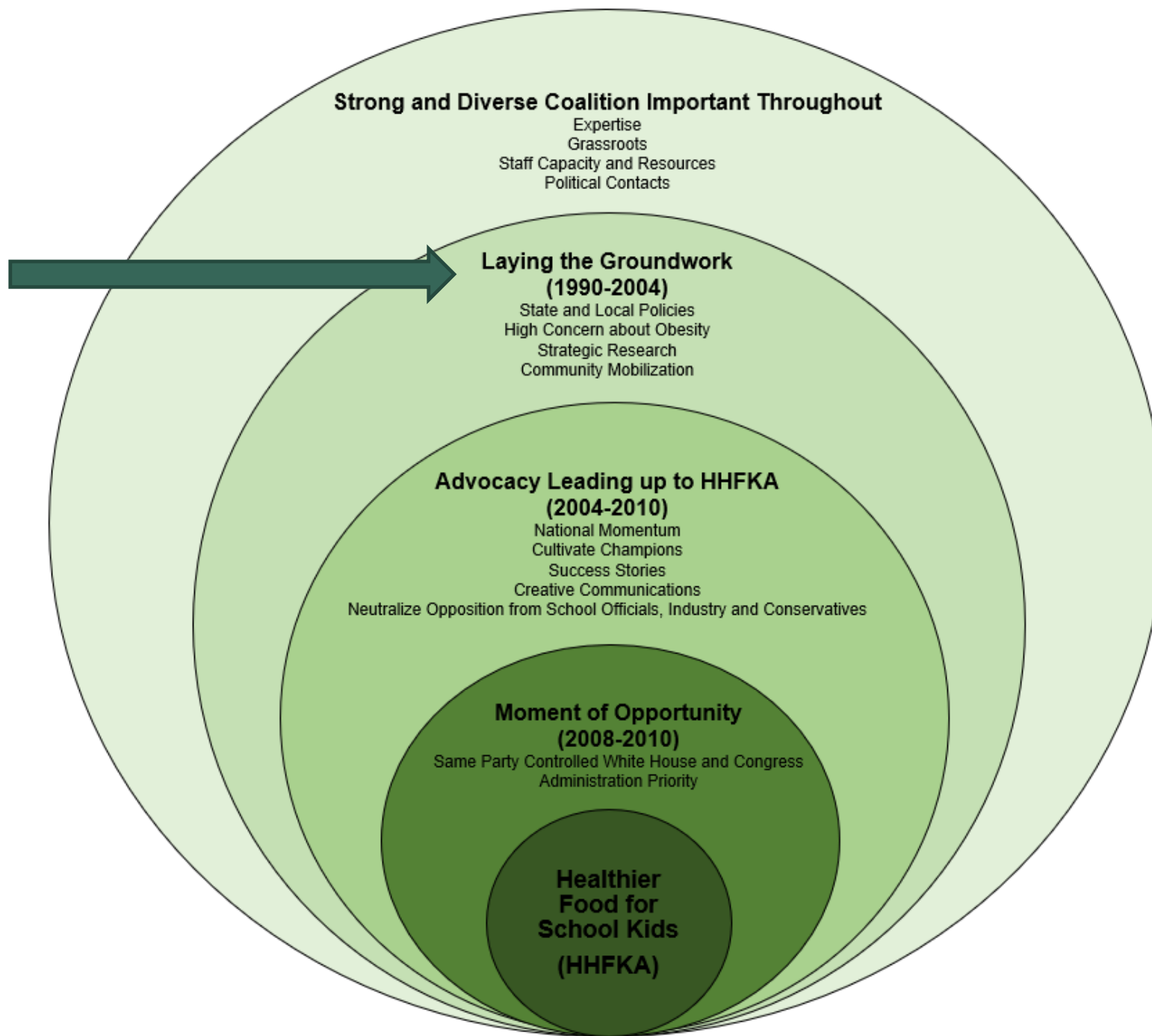
- Provide an in-depth look into how HHFKA came to pass to inform other nutrition and public health policy advocacy initiatives
- Case study covers 2003 to 2015
- Focus on nutrition standards



SO HOW DID ADVOCATES DO IT?

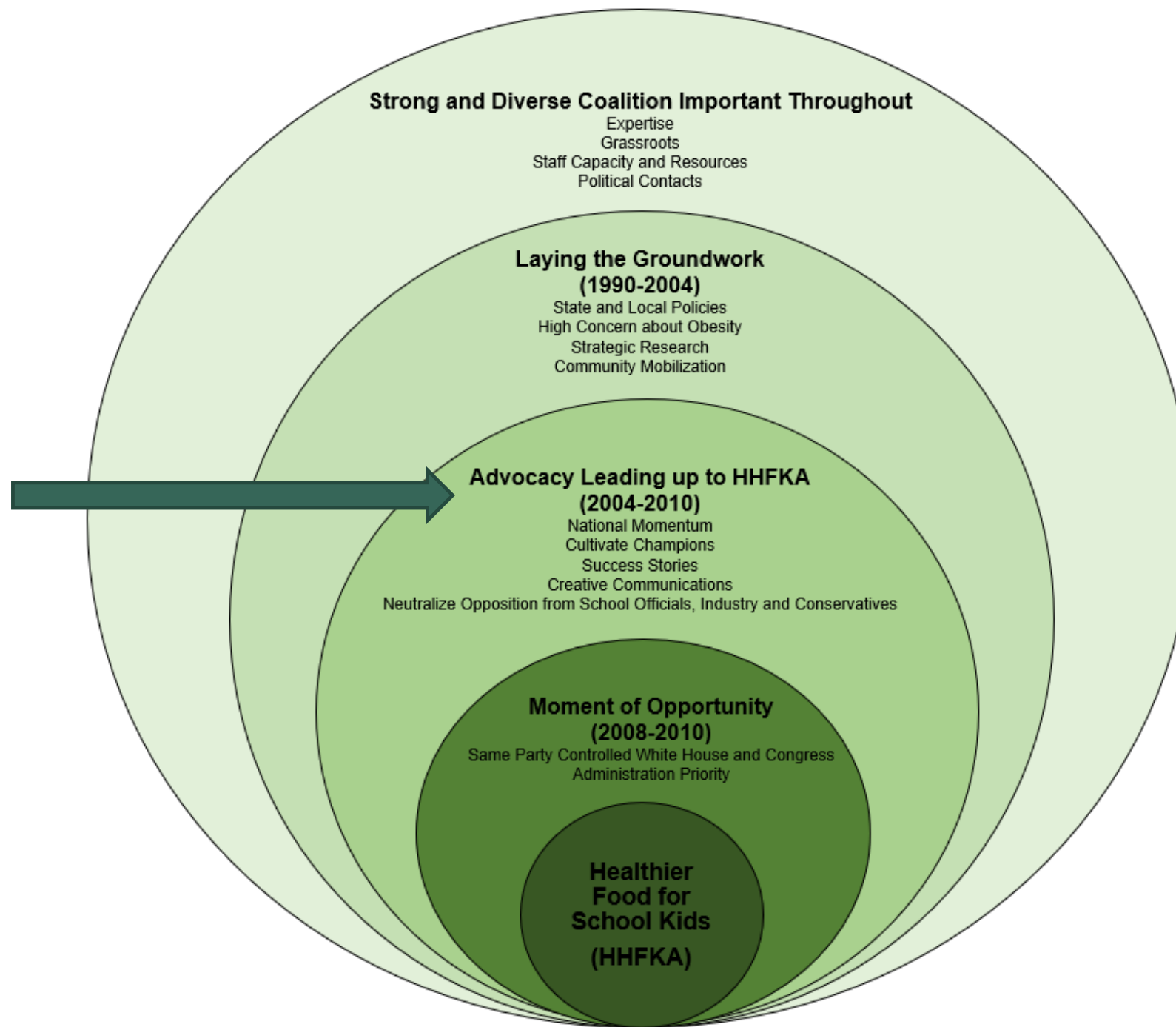






1990s: First identify the problem and the solution

- Research
 - Childhood obesity increasing
 - Unhealthy school foods
- Policy cost-effective, sustainable
- Early advocacy success: 1994 CNR meals based on *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*



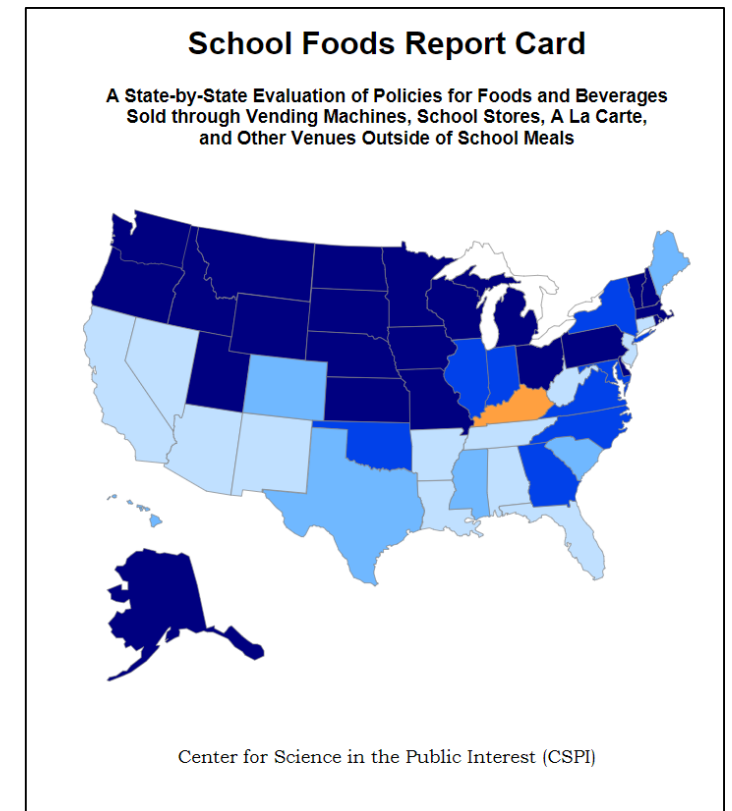
2000s: Tactics used leading up to HHFKA

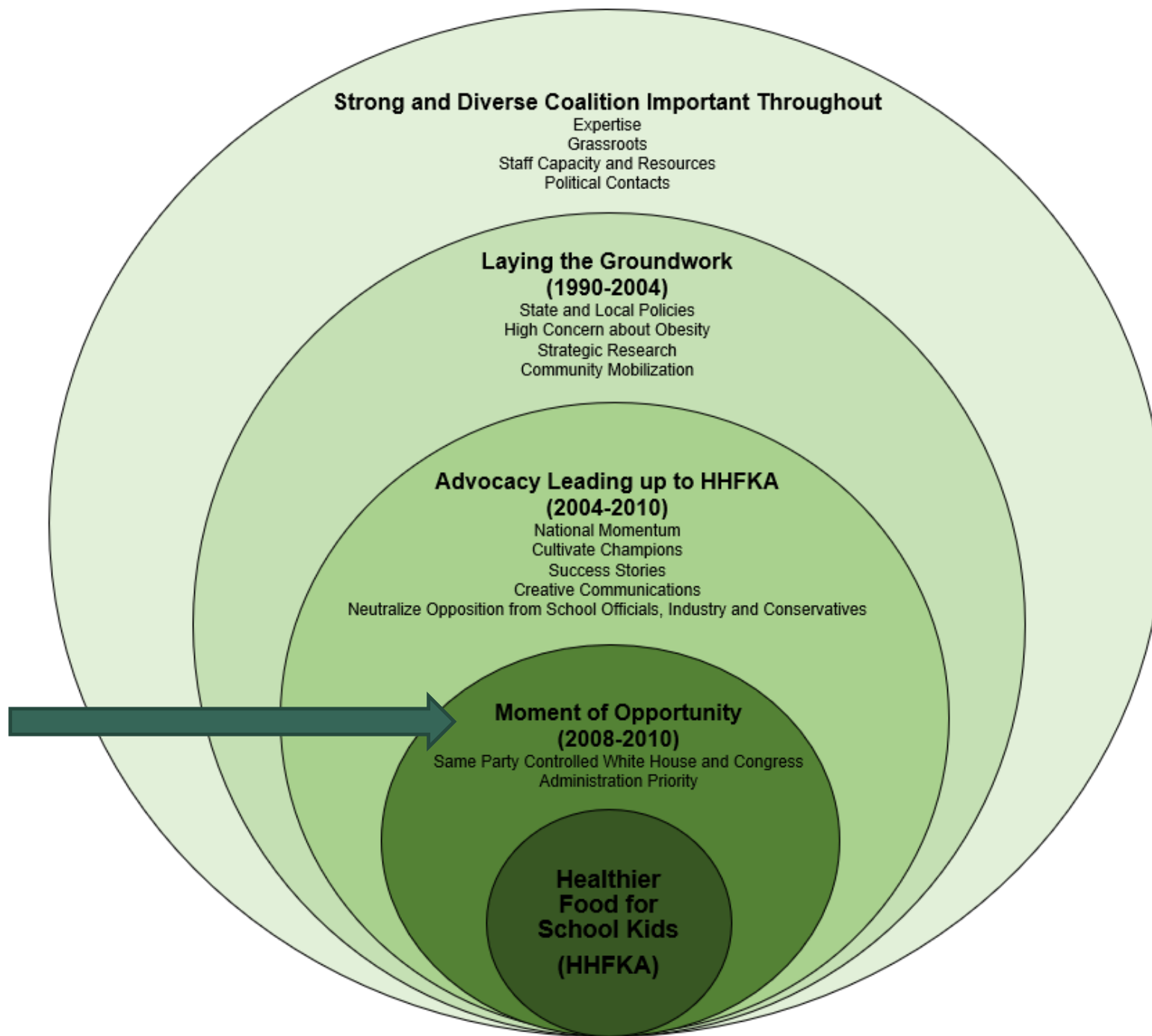
- Build consensus and coordinate action
- Build momentum at national, state, and local level
 - CSPI cultivated interest and technical assistance to pass policies
- Use the research for advocacy
- Bring industry to the table
- Diffuse opposition



2000s: Leading up to HHFKA

- Competitive foods (snacks and beverages)
 - Congressional legislation (2005-2010)
 - Institute of Medicine report (2007)
 - USDA and CDC case studies, CSPI state report cards
 - Bipartisan and industry support by 2006
 - Amendment to 2007 farm bill
- School meals
 - Bush Administration contracted Institute of Medicine report on school meals (released in 2009)



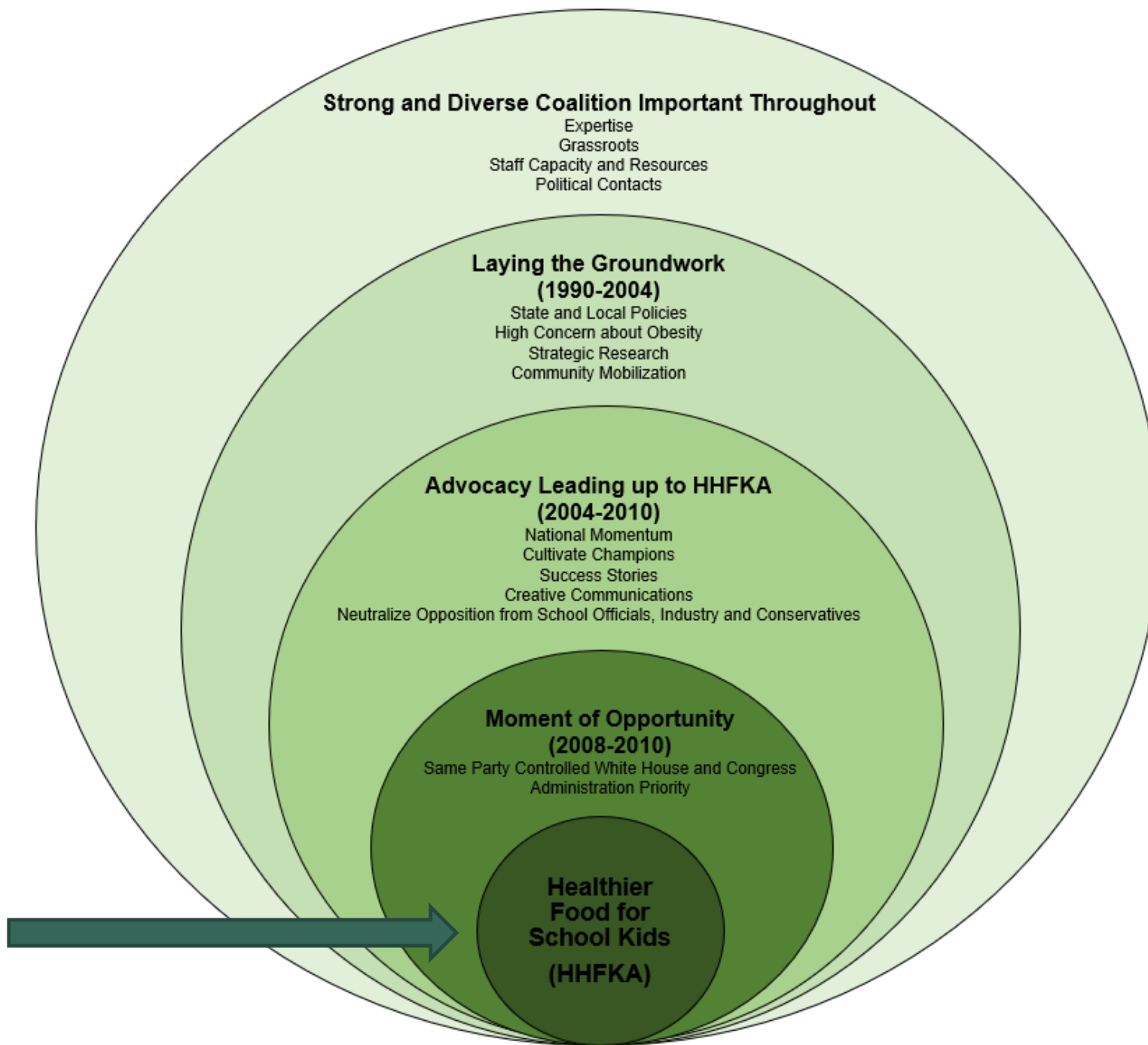


Moment of opportunity

- Perfect storm
- Nontraditional and new partners
- Use of research
- Funders
- Communications

Getting HHFKA to the finish line

- Challenges
 - Anti-hunger groups preferred House CNR bill
 - Senate CNR bill SNAP offset
- How challenges have been resolved
 - Bridge organizations





Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act passes!






After the law passes: regulations and defense

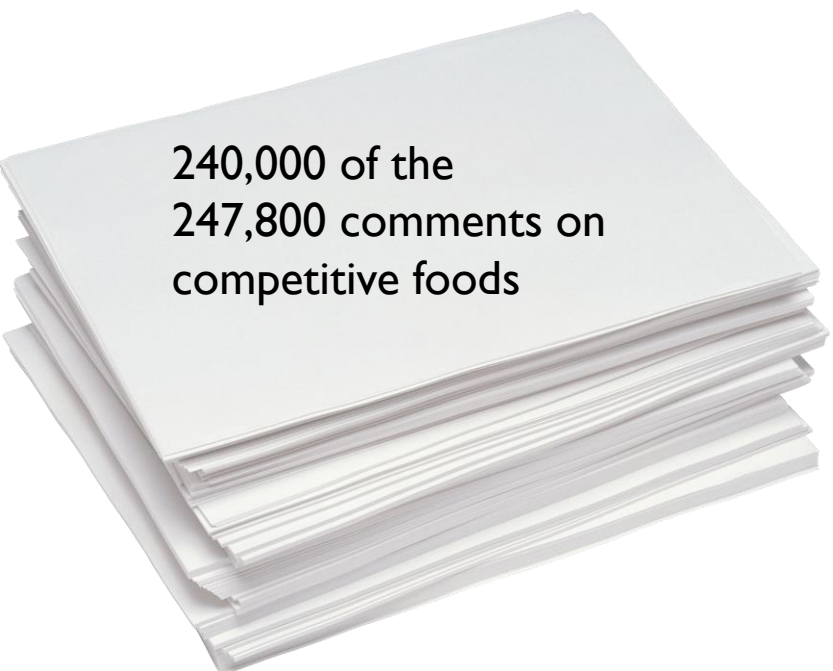


Implementation and defense of HHFKA

- Implementation
 - Comment on regulations



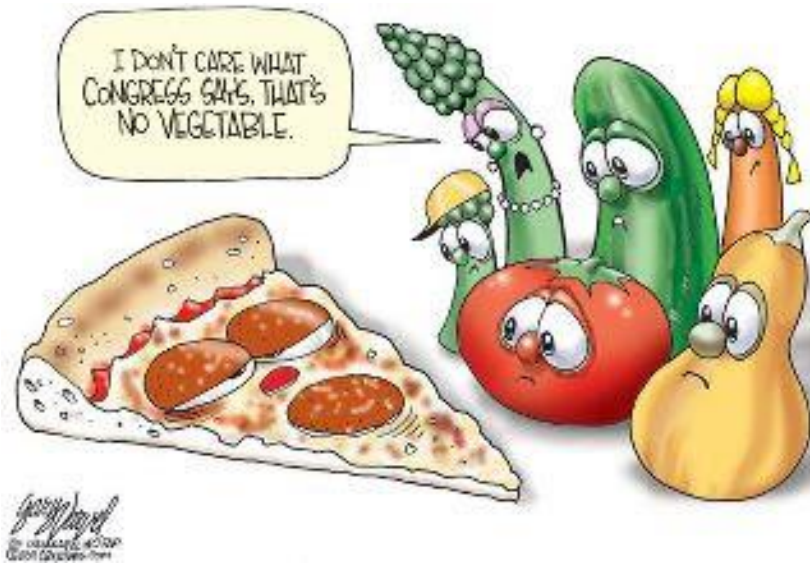
135,000 of the
138,000 comments on
meal standards



240,000 of the
247,800 comments on
competitive foods

Defense of HHFKA

- Opposition
 - First came pizza as a vegetable



Defense of HHFKA

- Additional opposition
 - Limits on french fries
 - Whole-grain rich requirement
 - Sodium reduction targets
- Countering the opposition
- Work with USDA and White House



Key takeaways



Key takeaways: Policy

- National policy change often takes time
 - 20 years leading up to HHFKA
 - State and local momentum
- Passing legislation first step of the process: implementation and defense essential
- Timing (and luck) plays a role: “All the stars aligning”

Key takeaways: Advocacy

- Parents, concerned citizens, health professionals, and local leaders have power, but do not always realize it
 - Grassroots involvement essential
- Mix of research and real-life success stories
- Make up for limited resources through coalitions
- Differences of opinion between allies as much of a barrier as opposition from legislators or industry



Key takeaways: Industry

- Food industry not monolithic
- Public health organizations can have different motives than industry, yet still work together
- Advantage of national nutrition policy easier and less expensive for industry than different policies in states and localities
- Industry can respond to changing demand



THANK YOU

