

APRIL 5, 2001

**MOTHER WHOSE SON DIED FROM CONTAMINATED MEAT AND SCHAKOWSKY
DENOUNCE THREAT TO SCHOOL CHILDREN**

**BUSH ADMINISTRATION MAY WEAKEN INSPECTION STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL
LUNCH MEAT**

CHICAGO, IL - U.S Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today at a news conference denounced President Bush's possible reversal of zero tolerance for salmonella in ground beef served to children in schools. Average daily participation in the school lunch program is 27,000,000 children. Nancy Donley, a mother who lost her young son due to tainted meat, joined Schakowsky at Peirce School in Chicago for today's event.

There are 600 deaths each year in the United States resulting from salmonella and 1.4 million illnesses. Under a standard set by the Clinton Administration, the Department of Agriculture rejected 5 million pounds of beef because of salmonella contamination and the Department has found it in over 5% of the school lunch samples. The single largest supplier of beef to the school lunch program in 1999-2000 was Supreme Beef of Dallas. That is the ONLY company in the country that failed salmonella testing instituted by the Department of Agriculture.

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The following is Schakowsky's statement:

"When my constituents send their young children to school in the morning, those parents don't need to have another reason to worry about the safety of their children. Thanks to President Bush and his close allies in the meat industry, parents should start to worry. The administration has clearly signaled that it is considering yet another attack on public health.

"I still haven't been able to fully digest arsenic in the water, and now it's salmonella in the meat. At a time when Senator Durbin is proposing to step up inspection of imported meats because of mad cow disease and hoof and mouth disease, the Bush Administration is thinking about cutting inspection of meats for our school children right here at home. That is incomprehensible. What a sad day in America when children will be safer eating a happy meal instead of their school lunch.

"We need to send a clear signal back to this Administration that we will not tolerate this kind of reckless public policy that is a pay back to the special interests. It's no surprise that the meat industry group wrote to Secretary Veneman on March 21 complaining about current safety standards, and in less than month, the Administration showed who it really wants to protect. And it is not our school children. □ □

"I don't trust Bush on public health issues as far as I could throw a cow. □

"Bush has said that he will leave no child behind. If his administration puts this plan into action, plenty of kids will be left behind, sick at home or in the hospital. And in some cases, maybe even lost forever."