



October 15, 2003

The following letter was sent to each member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry:

Dear Senator _____:

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for being a continued friend of U.S. agriculture, and to urge you to support S. 1428, "The Commonsense Consumption Act of 2003."

The recent, much-publicized efforts to bring frivolous and abusive lawsuits against the food producing and manufacturing industries are a direct threat to U.S. corn growers and corn refiners and do nothing to stem America's rising obesity rates.

The truth is America's obesity epidemic has been caused by an increase in daily caloric consumption *concurrent with* a major lack of physical activity. Between 1977 and 1995, individual caloric intake increased by almost 200 calories per day, from 1,876 calories to 2,043 calories. Theoretically, consuming an extra 100 calories a day for a year can lead to a gain of 10 pounds.

At the same time Americans are consuming more calories, they have become physically inactive. According to the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, nearly half (4 in 10) of all American adults engage in no daily physical activity. Only about one-half of U.S. young people (ages 12 to 21) regularly participate in vigorous physical activity, and one-fourth reported no vigorous physical activity at all. On the flip side, one-quarter of U.S. children spend four hours or more watching television daily.

This is an issue of personal responsibility. Rather than casting blame on the food industry through frivolous lawsuits, we should be trying to educate Americans on the benefits of balanced nutrition and increased physical activity.

S. 1428 would prohibit these frivolous lawsuits and prevent major damage to America's corn growing and refining industries that produce ingredients found in many of the food products being targeted. These ingredients include high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). Nationally, more than 545 million bushels of corn annually are consumed in the production of HFCS. The production of HFCS employs thousands of hard-working men and women in the corn refining industry and benefits tens of thousands of corn growers throughout the country. The futures of all these men and women are threatened by the needless legal assaults on America's food industry.

We thank you for your consideration of our views and hope you will protect U.S. agriculture by supporting S. 1428, "The Commonsense Consumption Act of 2003."

Sincerely,

Corn Refiners Association, Inc.
National Corn Growers Association