



Richmond Metro Board
American Heart Association
4217 Park Place Court
Richmond, VA 23060

Richmond City Council
900 East Main Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Dear Richmond City Council:

On behalf of the American Heart Association Richmond Metro Board, we thank you for your dedication to the health of the City of Richmond's employees and citizens. We are pleased to move forward the 2015 Healthy Eating, Acting Living Resolution. We urge you to support the creation of a Healthy Vending policy. Right now there are few, if any, healthy food and beverage options available in public places, like parks, recreation centers, and other city buildings. But as many people try to eat healthier, the demand for healthier options is increasing. A 2011 analysis reported sales of healthier snacks are outpacing traditional snack foods and contribute to increased sales growth and profits for food companies. Healthy vending provides employees and families the opportunities to make the healthy choice.

What we eat and drink impacts our health, but we tend to eat what is easily available. Eating healthy and being physically active helps reduce risk of diabetes and heart disease. The American Heart Association identified reducing sodium and sugar as crucial in reducing cardiovascular disease in the United States. Approximately 30.1% of Richmond residents are obese and 28.7% are overweight. Improving the types of foods and beverages served and sold in workplaces positively affects employees' eating behaviors and can result in weight loss. Further, maintaining a healthy workforce can positively impact indirect costs by reducing absenteeism and increasing worker productivity.

The City of Richmond should lead by example and make the healthy choice the easy choice. Upon survey, 78% of City of Richmond employees said they would be more likely to purchase something out of the vending machines if there were healthier options. Thank you for your service to the city. We thank you for your demonstrated commitment to the health of Richmond's citizens and employees and ask you vote for a healthy vending policy.

Sincerely,

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Dr. Lornel Tompkins
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Metro Richmond Board**

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