

Failure to Lunch: School Quits Parents Cold Turkey

There may be no such thing as a free lunch--but there should be freedom in packing one! Unfortunately for a four-year-old in North Carolina, freedom isn't on this administration's menu. After an inspector rummaged around her lunch, they decided it was too "unhealthy" and seized it! The agent insisted that the "turkey and cheese sandwich, banana, apple juice, and potato chips" her mom had packed [didn't meet USDA guidelines](#) because it was missing milk and a vegetable. So what wholesome meal did they replace it with? Chicken nuggets! Not only did the little girl barely touch them, but the school sent a note home billing the family for the meal.



What—No Dipping Sauce?

Where does the federal government get the power to charge this family because it doesn't like what it's eating? I suppose if the government can force you to buy health insurance, and it can force you to pay for contraception, then a vegetable mandate is small potatoes. According to a spokesman for West Hoke Elementary, the regulations were put in place by the Division of Child Development and Early Education at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (naturally!). The rule states, "When [preschoolers] bring their own food for meals and snacks to the center, if the food does not meet the specified nutritional requirements, the center must provide additional food necessary to meet those requirements." Notice that it doesn't say to confiscate the food and fine the family. It says to supplement the meal. (And I doubt fried chicken was the replacement the USDA had in mind!)

The mom was so irate about the government's brown bag check that she contacted the local newspaper and her congressman. "What got me so mad is, number one, don't tell my kid I'm not packing her lunch box properly," she told the *Carolina Journal*. "I pack her lunchbox according to what she eats. It always consists of a fruit. It never consists of vegetables. She eats vegetables at home because I have to watch her because she doesn't really care for vegetables," she said. The inspector wouldn't know that. Nor would he know about the little girl's allergies or health issues. But, like a true government bureaucrat, he still insisted that he knew better. "We as a nation are ceding our responsibilities to care for our children every day," [writes](#) Julie Gunlock. "Even the most basic tasks--like packing simple lunches--are being turned over to our government overlords..."

This is exactly what Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) [meant](#) in November when she said that she looks forward to "doing for child care what we did for health care." The Left's goal is not just to control you. The goal is to control your children. And the more authority it can siphon away from parents, the better its chances are. As it stands, more power is being centralized in HHS than almost every other agency combined. Under ObamaCare, it can dictate the doctors you see, what treatments you can afford, what values you violate, and now, what lunches you pack. What's next? Will inspectors patrol the gyms to see who's exercising or chaperone date night to make sure you order low-cal? If anything, this incident at West Hoke Elementary should show Americans exactly what's at stake this November. This isn't about lunches--it's about liberty. And if Americans aren't careful, they'll lose the battle for both.