Tim,

After reading your [article](http://www.indystar.com/story/news/2015/01/29/move-kobe-beef-come-garbage-fed-hoosier-hogs/22487299/) about HB1170, I had to send you a not so brief response that offers a slightly different angle on the bill.

40% of our food is wasted, while 1 in 6 Hoosiers are food insecure.

Rotted food produces methane gas that is 21 times more harmful that CO2.

An estimated 22 million food items [seen here](http://www.k12foodrescue.com/active-schools.html) that are unopened and unpeeled but unwanted from the trays of Indiana students in Indiana schools end up in landfill annually spewing methane gas into the environment. Over 1 billion items nationwide.

The EPA and USDA beg schools to participate in food recovery, meaning donate instead of dump.

The Richard Russel National School Lunch Act was amended through a 2012 Agricultural federal appropriations bill encouraging schools to donate instead of dump by providing legal protection for donations.

The 1996 Bill Emerson Good Samaritan laws cover food donations for restaurants, and to be sure it covers schools, it was placed into the aforementioned 2012 appropriations bill.

**These are facts that can be researched, and are not in dispute.** To be clear, we damage our environment as we simultaneously carelessly ignore the simplest hunger relief solution that even a 4 year old could assemble.   It's not just food being wasted, it's government mandated healthy food being wasted from schools intended to help reduce the obesity crisis in our country.  Somewhere a lightbulb just went off in a 4 year olds head.

Yet when pondering food waste, our government officials in Indiana laser beam in on feeding pigs over people. Now I will grant you, it's almost 100% out of ignorance that they simply are unaware of the school food waste issue, but the Michelle Obama My Plate program is producing excess school food waste at an alarming rate.  It's not that they don't care.  Not saying there was not waste before, but it has increased substantially.  I spoke at the Indiana State Nutrition Association, and 100% of the Food Service Directors raised their hand to the question of increased food waste with the My Plate program.  That's not a political statement, as I actually support the program, but one cannot deny the current increase in waste.  An Indiana TV station did a piece on it seen [here](http://www.abc57.com/story/27382636/lunchroom-landfills).

Our [K12FoodRescue.com](http://www.k12foodrescue.com/) program is growing like wildfire because when administrators see the facts and pictures, as well as their fellow school districts involved, it's impossible to say no.  Our goal is to have all Indiana schools participating in K-12 Food Rescue by 2017.  We are not going to the moon here.  Kids place unopened/unpeeled unwanted food items on their tray that they are forced to take via the My Plate program in a food recovery bin, and after the lunch period, they go into a dry storage and cold storage area marked Food Rescue.  A food pantry then comes and picks them up that feeds children and families in need in the community.  While food is donated, students are informed this is a waste diversion program, **not a food donation program**, so kids are not pressured to donate.  They are pressured to make a wise choice concerning  environmental protection.

Unwanted/unopened/unpeeled food goes in a food recovery bin, because it harms our environment if it ends up in a landfill.  **That produces no pressure to donate.**  It's the same pressure I feel at home to put a cardboard box in the grey recycling trash can, instead of the blue one.  **It's the kind of pressure that has no negative result.** We want all the students to eat their food, not waste it. But if they don't want it, we want them to have a positive choice they can make.  Plain and simple. Picture again the 4 year old with a lightbulb.

Our goal can be reached with the "worker bee program" as I call it.  Just regular citizens educating their school administrators.  Using that approach, we have over 100 cafeterias connected with over 25 different food pantries in Indiana.  But the faster solution would be for "heavy lifters" to get involved.  That would be politicians, celebrities, newspaper reporters, TV reporters, etc.  We simply **need a crusade** to put an end to this nonsense, so that we aren't thinking about pigs first when we ponder food waste.  I don't mind the feed the pig program in HB1170 personally.  It will protect the environment in a cost effective way and provide other economic benefits.  But I am outraged it's being considered before a solution is provided for the perfectly good food that can be eaten that is thrown away.  Perfectly good and healthy food should not end up inside of pigs instead of providing hunger relief for food insecure citizens.

We are the only state in America with over 100 schools donating tray to trash food to food pantries. Our state can literally lead a nation out of this insanity, we just need some heavy lifters.  I sent an email to Matt UBelhor, the author of HB1170, and he called me immediately, and our director of operations contacted our local state rep in Noblesville, and had a conversation with her as well.  Both were very interested and unaware.

Any help you could do with some heavy lifting would be an incredible blessing.  If you are interested in the most comprehensive food waste study in America, it was produced in 2012, and can be seen [here](http://www.nrdc.org/food/files/wasted-food-IP.pdf).

Thanks for your time considering this simple solution to a tragic, embarrassing, inane, and solvable problem of school food waste.