



POLICY BRIEF: SB 1420 Padilla (D-Pacoima)

Summary: SB 1420 Padilla (D-Pacoima) requires restaurant chains to display nutritional information next to each menu item. Restaurants with more than 14 units, whether they are jointly owned or franchised, must post the number of calories, grams of saturated fat, grams of trans fat, grams of carbohydrates, and milligrams of sodium. This data must appear clearly and conspicuously beside each appropriate menu item. Additionally, the menu must include the provision, “Recommended limits for a 2,000 calorie daily diet are 20 grams of saturated fat and 2,300 milligrams of sodium.” Violations of the law would be punished by fines between \$50 and \$500 per failed inspection.

Background: Existing federal law mandates that nutritional and dietary information be provided on packaged food products, but such information is not generally available at the point of purchase of food products not packaged in restaurants. This bill is part of a trend to curb obesity by widening the scope of regulation of the food service industry at state and local levels. Obesity is considered to be a national health epidemic in the United States, and it is a leading cause of chronic disease, such as diabetes. In Los Angeles County alone, direct costs of medical care for diabetes and indirect costs associated with disability and lost productivity were estimated to be \$5.6 billion, according to a 2007 L.A. Health Trends report by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. The California Department of Health Services pegs the total cost of physical inactivity, obesity, and overweight in California at a staggering \$21.68 billion. If passed, SB 1420 would increase opportunities for healthy eating by encouraging greater public awareness about the nutritional facts of unpackaged foods sold in restaurants. This legislation could also significantly impact consumer behaviors and potentially reverse the current obesity epidemic in California. The result would mean substantial economic savings associated with lost productivity and health care costs to both the public and private sectors.

Status: Assembly Health Committee

Supporters: California Center for Public Health Advocacy, California Medical Association, Consumer Federation of California, Berkley City Council

Opponents: California Restaurant Association, California Retailers Association, Wendy’s International