February 23, 2017

Statement in opposition to the
“Common Sense Nutrition Disclosure Act of 2017”

We, the undersigned organizations oppose the “Common Sense Nutrition Disclosure Act of 2017” (S.261/HR.772). We do not think that it is common sense to weaken a policy that would allow people to make their own, informed choices about how many calories to eat at a time when obesity rates are at a record high. The bill would undercut the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) menu labeling regulations and undermine congressional intent to provide access to calorie labeling in a broad range of chain food service establishments.

The national menu labeling law requires chain restaurants and similar food establishments to provide consumers with calorie information for standard food and beverage items on menus and menu boards. Studies show that providing nutrition information at restaurants can help people make lower calorie choices, and a national poll found that 80 percent of Americans support calorie labeling at chain supermarkets and restaurants. The bill would undermine the benefits of the national menu labeling law and confuse and mislead consumers.

Pizza chains and other establishments that offer delivery service should post calories on their menu boards just like other chain restaurants, as Congress intended. While some consumers use online menus, others use paper menus at home or menus and menu boards in a restaurant. All menus should list calorie so consumers can see the information when and where they are deciding what to order. Also, pizza chains need only post calories for the standard menu items they list on their menu boards — not every possible pizza combination — just as delis, ice cream shops, burrito stands, and other chains with variable menu items will do. Pizza chains in Vermont, California, Seattle, and other states/municipalities are already posting calorie information on menus—demonstrating it can be done in a reasonable space and at a reasonable cost.

It is important for calories to be listed on a menu in a standard format as an item is offered for sale. Without standardization, people will have more difficulty understanding and using the nutrition information for menu items. Posting the total calories per menu item enables consumers to more easily compare different types of food items, such as nachos, chicken wings, or pizza, and leaves it up to the individual – not the restaurant – to determine how many people will share the item. It would be deceptive to label muffins, entrees, desserts, and most menu items as multiple servings, since items are most often consumed by one person.

The national menu labeling law was a bipartisan compromise supported by public health organizations and the restaurant industry, and it built on the momentum of more than 20 state and local policies. The bill undermines the consensus and compromise worked out between a wide diversity of interests to pass the national menu labeling law. The
bill would weaken an important tool intended to help Americans make informed food choices at a time when obesity and other nutrition-related health problems are at crisis levels, adding significant fiscal and public health burdens on the American public, businesses, and federal, state, and local budgets.

**We ask you to support consumer choice and American’s health and join us in opposing the Common Sense Nutrition Disclosure Act of 2017 (S.261/HR.772).**

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Defeat Diabetes Foundation
D’fine Sculpting & Nutrition LLC
Directors of Health Promotion and Education
Earth Day Network
Eat Drink Politics
Eat Smart, Move More South Carolina
Ehrens Consulting (ND)
Energy Up!
Food Policy Action
Food Sleuth, LLC
Illinois Public Health Institute
Integrated Medical Weight Loss (RI)
Iowa Public Health Association
Jump IN for Healthy Kids (IN)
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University
LiveWell Colorado
Louisiana Public Health Institute
MomsRising.org
National Action Against Obesity
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Congress of Black Women
National Consumers League
National Physicians Alliance
National WIC Association
Nemours Children’s Health System
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
New York State Department of Health
Nutrition First (WA)
Ohio Public Health Association
Oral Health America
Oregon Public Health Institute
Parents Educators & Advocates Connection for Healthy School Food (CA)
Piedmont Dialysis Center (NC)
Project Bread - The Walk for Hunger
Public Health Advocacy Institute
Public Health Institute
Real Food For Kids
Real Food For Kids – Montgomery (MD)
Recipe for Success Foundation
School Based Health Alliance of Arkansas
Shape Up America!
Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior
SuperKids Nutrition
Trust for America’s Health
| University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health Voices for America’s Children |
| Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center (NC) Young People’s Healthy Heart Program (ND) Youth Empowered Solutions (YES!) |
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