We’re gaining weight like never before before

Sources:  
1. State Department of Health

2. Nielsen S. Patterns and trends in food portion sizes. Journal of the American Medical Association 2003: 289(4).

3. Center for Science in the Public Interest. *Anyone’s Guess: The need for nutrition labeling at chain restaurants.*

4. Kui T. Menu Labeling as a Potential Strategy for Combating the Obesity Epidemic. *American Journal of Public Health* 2006; 96(9)

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**It’s time to make menu labeling the law.**

There is currently a bill in committee (HR 1234) that will come to the floor of the House of Representatives during this session. **Vote yes on HR 1234- the “Menu labeling act”.**It is good policy for the people of our state.

Menu labeling will give our citizens the information they want and need at the time they are choosing what to feed themselves and their families.

Obesity is a growing problem, leading to diseases that cost hundreds of millions of dollars. The increasing consumption of fast food appears to be one of the big reasons. There’s a simple way to give people the information they need to make the choices they want: Require chain restaurants to post the calories for their menu items, just as they post the price.

*The growth of obesity in the U.S.*

* Menu labeling gives people information so they can make the best choices for themselves and their families
* National public opinion polls show that the majority of Americans—up to 83%—favor menu labeling5
* Menu labeling gives people *standardized information* so they can compare items, much like the Nutrition Facts labels on the food in grocery stores

Obesity is a big problem in the United States, and it is a growing problem. In 2008, more than a third of adults in the U.S. were classified as obese, and the trend continues upwards.1 Scientific evidence points to fast food as one reason for the obesity epidemic. Many people are choosing fast food to save time and money, but the amount of calories they eat when they do so is increasing.2

Obesity puts people at increased risk for diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer. Obesity-related medical expenditures in the U.S. are over $50 billion per year.

No single policy can solve this costly problem, but one piece of the puzzle is menu labeling at chain restaurants. Menu labeling is simply displaying calories on the menu boards at fast food restaurants. This gives people information at the moment they are choosing what to eat – the *point of purchase.*

Knowing the calories in fast food is not just common sense: when researchers asked people to guess the amount of calories in food, they consistently underestimated the calorie count. In fact, the more calories in the food, the farther off people’s guesses were!3 In fact, fast food can have shocking amounts of fat and calories. Research has shown that people choose fewer calories when they have more information when they are choosing what to eat.4

**In grocery stores, you know what’s in food before you buy.**

**Shouldn’t restaurants tell you too?**

Menu labeling