

Testimony in Support of SB 866 - Public Health - Chain Restaurants - Sodium and Added Sugars Warning Icons

Finance Committee

February 25, 2026

FAVORABLE

Free State PTA (FSPTA) represents over 70,000 volunteer members and families in over 500 public schools. As the state's premier and largest child advocacy organization, Free State PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families, schools and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. ***We are offering a favorable testimony in support of Senate Bill 866.***

This bill is a commonsense public health measure that gives Marylanders clear, easy-to-understand information at the point of purchase when menu items contain extremely high levels of added sugars or sodium. Excess sodium and added sugars are major contributors to preventable conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. Consumers deserve transparent information to make informed decisions for themselves and their families, especially when a single menu item can exceed half the recommended daily limit. SB 866 does not ban any foods or restrict consumer choice. It simply requires large chain restaurants to provide a clear warning icon and explanation, **ensuring that customers can quickly recognize high-risk items**. The bill also provides guidance from the Department of Health, and an education campaign to support compliance. By promoting transparency and informed choice, this legislation empowers Maryland residents, encourages healthier reformulation of menu items, and advances the goal of preventing chronic disease.

Free State PTA urges the committee to issue a favorable report on SB 866.

Thank you,
Free State PTA, Advocacy Committee