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February 25 2026

SB 0866 - FAV

Public Health - Chain Restaurants - Sodium and Added Sugars Warning Icons

Dear Chair [Senator Pamela Beidle](#), Vice Chair [Antonio Hayes](#), and Members of the Finance Committee,

The recommended daily sodium limit is 2,300 mg. The average American adult consumes almost 50% more sodium than the recommended limit per day. Restaurant food tends to have more sodium than food prepared at home. Consuming too much sodium is linked to increased blood pressure and elevated risks of heart disease and of stroke. Together, heart disease and stroke kill more Americans each year than any other cause. High sugar consumption is positively correlated with obesity. Too much body fat can cause inflammation and other long-lasting changes in the body. Obesity can increase the risk of many serious health problems for adults and children. Obesity impacts health care costs for patients and the health care system.

New York City and Philadelphia enforce laws requiring chain restaurants to include high salt warnings, New York City also requires high sugar warnings, on menu items. The

Center for Science in the Public Interest (CPSI) looked at the sodium content of menu items from the top 91 highest-grossing US restaurant chains, and found that many menu items at these large chains exceeded the daily recommended sodium value for US adults. A recent study [[Strengthening salt reduction strategies in the out-of-home food sector: warning labels and beyond](#) Elisa Pineda *The Lancet Public Health* August, 2025] concluded that salt warning labels on restaurant menus in particular are a promising policy option to address excessive salt intake within the UK out-of-home food sector. Across two trials the labels were found to be equally effective regardless of age, sex, or education level. Secular Maryland shares with CPSI the perspective that public policy should be centered on promoting the public interest, including public health, in accord with results of the

relevant scientific research.

Respectfully,
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