

HB 1048/SB 866: Public Health - **Chain Restaurants - Sodium and Added Sugars Warning Icons:** Please vote to **SUPPORT** this bill.

Dear Health Committee and Finance Committee:

I am writing to respectfully **support HB 1048/SB 866**, concerning *Public Health – Chain Restaurants – Sodium and Added Sugars Warning Icons*.

Maryland residents have become increasingly aware of the connection between diet and long-term health outcomes. Providing clear, visible warning icons for menu items that exceed recommended levels of sodium or added sugars is a commonsense step toward empowering consumers to make informed nutritional choices.

HB 1048/SB 866 promotes transparency at the point of purchase, allowing individuals and families to better understand the nutritional content of the food they are ordering in chain restaurants. Many consumers may not realize that certain menu items contain excessive levels of sodium or added sugars that can contribute to chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes, obesity and metabolic syndrome, dental issues and poorer overall health.

Importantly, this legislation does not restrict consumer choice or limit what restaurants may offer. Chain restaurants would be required to label foods honestly, which may push them to reformulate recipes to reduce sodium or added sugars or offer healthier menu options. Also, it ensures that customers have access to clear and easily understandable information before making a decision. When people are equipped with accurate information, they are better positioned to manage their personal health and dietary needs.

Providing nutritional warning icons is a reasonable, low-burden approach that supports public health awareness while maintaining freedom of choice. **Helping Marylanders make informed decisions today may reduce preventable health complications and associated healthcare costs in the future.**

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to **support HB 1048/SB 866**.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Respectfully,

Trudy Tibbals