



## **SB 977 – Healthy Restaurant Meals for Kids**

### **Senator Akilah Weber Pierson, M.D.**

#### **SUMMARY**

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SB 977 will require a chain restaurant that sells children's meals to offer at least one healthy meal that meets minimum nutrition standards and would require that chain restaurant to train its employees on how to comply with those healthy meal requirements.

#### **BACKGROUND**

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Restaurants are a key source of food for families in California. Families with children consume food away from home four to five times a week on average. Between 2015 and 2018, children ages 2-11 years old consumed an average of 11.4% of their daily calories from fast food alone. While some chain restaurants such as McDonald's have made their kids' meals healthier, much of the food offered on restaurant children's menus does not meet minimum nutrition standards for healthy meals. A 2018 analysis of kids' meal combinations at the top 50 U.S. restaurant chains (as ranked by revenue) found that, among the chains with kids' menus, 71.9% of kids' meals did not meet expert nutrition standards for calories, total fat, saturated fat and trans fat combined, and sodium.

California is facing a childhood nutrition and weight crisis. In 2017, 40% of 5<sup>th</sup> graders, 38% of 7<sup>th</sup> graders, and 36% of 9<sup>th</sup> graders were overweight or obese for their age. Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, Latino and Black children had disproportionately higher rates of obesity than other racial and ethnic groups. Compared with children at a healthy weight, children with obesity are at higher risk for a range of health problems, including asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes; they also are more likely to become obese as adults.

Existing law as established by SB 1192 (Monning) of 2018 already requires that a restaurant to provide a healthy beverage option for kid's meals. This bill takes it one step further by addressing the entire children's meal.

#### **SPECIFICALLY, THIS BILL**

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Amends Health and Safety Code to require a chain restaurant to offer a least one healthy children's meal that does not contain more than 550 calories, 700ml of sodium, 10% of calories from saturated fat, 15 grams of sugar, and zero grams of trans fats.

The meal shall include at least two of the following servings:

- one-half cup or more of fruit,
- one half cup or more of vegetables,
- one half-cup or more of nonfat/lowfat dairy,
- a serving of meat or meat alternative;
- a serving of eight or more grams of whole grains.

SB 977 defines a chain restaurant as a restaurant that is part of a chain with 20 or more locations doing business under the same name and offering for sale substantially the same menu items, regardless of the ownership of the locations.

SB 977 will require employees of these restaurants to be trained on complying with these meal requirements and each restaurant shall offer ongoing training.

#### **SUPPORT**

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American Heart Association (co-sponsor)

#### **CONTACT**

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