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I support S.70/H.264 – Healthy Kids Meals in Restaurants.

My research includes addressing, evaluating, and improving food access for low-income, marginalized populations.

Adolescent obesity –

The number of overweight and obese youth continues to increase.

There are significant racial and ethnic disparities in obesity presence among US youth with African American, Mexican Americans and Native Americans exceeding other ethnic groups. Pubertal maturation impacts obesity development, obese children have been found to start puberty earlier leading to physical and fertility consequences later in life.

Obese children are at a significant risk of being obese adults placing them at an increased risk for metabolic problems including insulin resistance, and inflammation.

Addressing our Built environment –

The built environment has been shown to have a significant impact on obesity. Nationally, researchers have identified an association between lower and medium wealth neighborhoods and the prevalence of fast-food restaurants. This bill will increase access to healthier meals in these neighborhoods and towns.

Time Scarcity –

Time scarcity is prevalent in many of our Vermont households; this occurs when families feel like they do not have enough time. Time scarcity leads to the decrease in family meals and an increase in the consumption of convenience foods including eating out at restaurants.

In my family, we are juggling our careers, indoor soccer practice, basketball practice, cub scouts, skiing club, and community engagement like attending the PTA and School Board meetings. We are an active family that also suffers from Time Scarcity.

Multiple researchers have identified a relationship between time scarcity and the dramatic increase in overweight and obesity in children. Families with higher incomes are more likely to consume healthier diets when they eat out than those with lower incomes. Foods purchased and eaten “on the run” are usually high in dietary fat, sodium, and calories; low in fruits, vegetables, fiber, calcium and iron. This bill will increase access to healthy options for families who are juggling a busy and active life.