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S.70 Nutritional Standards for Children's Menus in Restaurants
Senate Health and Welfare Committee
Wendy Knight, Commissioner, Tourism & Marketing
Agency of Commerce and Community Development
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The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing broadens awareness of Vermont as a tourism destination, markets Vermont to in-state and out-of-state travelers, and encourages visitors to purchase Vermont-made products and services. Each year, 13 million people visit Vermont. These visitors generate \$2.6 billion in spending, which represents 8% of the State's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

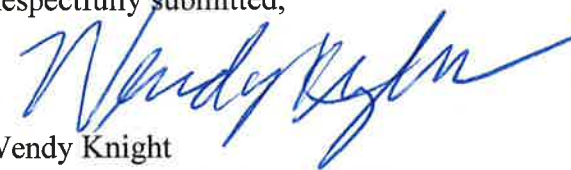
Vermont is legendary for its exceptional locally grown and produced food and craft beverages, and restaurants that feature local foods. Restaurants are a significant component of Vermont's tourism and hospitality industry. Next to lodging, restaurant spending is the second highest category of visitor spending. Visitors to Vermont spend \$450 million on food and beverage in restaurants. This visitor spending benefits restaurant owners, workers, chefs, farmers, and local manufacturers of craft beverages.

S.70 attempts to address childhood obesity by requiring restaurants to only serve children's meals that meet certain nutritional standards. The Vermont of Tourism and Marketing finds this approach problematic for several reasons: most restaurants do not have kids' meals; dollar menus and a la carte offerings easily evade this legislation; and independent restaurants with less than a certain amount of units are exempt from displaying calorie counts on menus, because small eateries lack the capacity to determine calories.

There are many causes of childhood obesity. If addressing childhood obesity is the goal of S.70, then let's address the issue head on with tangible solutions and not burden Vermont's restaurant businesses with unnecessary and costly mandates.

The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing does not support a mandate that will contribute to an increase in the operational cost for restaurants, impose additional burdens on businesses, infringe on business and creative decisions of chefs and restaurant owners, and limit dining options for visitors and residents.

Respectfully submitted,



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