



**Statement on S. 70 “An Act Relating to Nutritional Requirements for Children’s Meals”**

**Submitted by:**

Keith Stephenson

On Behalf of the National Restaurant Association

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Chairwoman Ayer, Vice-Chairwoman Lyons, and other respected members of the Health and Welfare Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today. On behalf of the members of the National Restaurant Association, we join the Vermont Chamber of Commerce in opposition to S. 70, which is being considered by the Committee today.

The National Restaurant Association is the leading business association for the restaurant and foodservice industry. The industry, predominated by small businesses, is comprised of more than one million restaurant and foodservice outlets employing 14.7 million employees and 10 percent of the U.S. workforce. With over 1,300 locations in Vermont, the restaurant industry provides over 30,000 jobs across the state.

The National Restaurant Association does not support the mandates included in S.70 that will impose additional burdens on restaurateurs, limit menu options and negatively impact a guest’s experience.

From family dining to quick service establishments, restaurants continue to expand better-for-you options for all customers, including children. The National Restaurant Association’s Kids LiveWell program demonstrates our commitment to act and lead by example. Kids LiveWell has been a groundbreaking initiative. To participate in Kids LiveWell, restaurants voluntarily serve and promote a selection of menu items that meet nutrition criteria based on leading health organizations’ recommendations, such as the USDA Dietary Guidelines. These menu items include a full meal (entrée, side, and beverage) and an additional side. Moreover, this initiative focuses on increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables, lean protein, whole grains and low-fat dairy, while limiting total calories, total fats, total sugar and sodium.

Additionally, better-for-you children’s meals are one of the hottest culinary trends in today’s restaurants. In 2018, 700 chefs surveyed by National Restaurant Association’s What’s Hot survey ranked better-for-you children’s meals in the top menu trends category for the sixth consecutive year. Restaurants voluntarily and increasingly respond to this consumer trend with an expanding array of nutritious choices available in children’s meals.

The National Restaurant Association welcomes the opportunity to work with the committee to promote healthy eating in local communities throughout the state and build upon the important work restaurateurs are already doing in Vermont.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony this morning and please feel free to contact me with your questions and ideas.

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