

1 S.141

2 Introduced by Senators Clarkson, Balint, Hooker and Ingram

3 Referred to Committee on

4 Date:

5 Subject: Health; food and lodging establishments; nutrition; children's meals

6 Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require  
7 restaurants licensed by the Department of Health to serve only children's meals  
8 that meet certain nutritional standards.

9 An act relating to nutritional requirements for children's meals

10 It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

11 Sec. 1. FINDINGS

12 The General Assembly finds that:

13 (1) Over the past 30 years, the obesity rate in the United States has more  
14 than doubled. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in  
15 2011, 69 percent of American adults were overweight or obese. In 2014,  
16 nearly 25 percent of adult Vermont residents were overweight or obese. With  
17 regard to children, approximately one-third were deemed overweight or obese  
18 nationwide in 2011, while in Vermont one-fourth of children were overweight  
19 or obese. Obese children are at least twice as likely as nonobese children to  
20 become obese adults.

1           (2) Obese children and adults are at greater risk for numerous adverse  
2           health consequences, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high  
3           blood pressure, high cholesterol, certain cancers, asthma, low self-esteem,  
4           depression, and other debilitating diseases.

5           (3) Obesity-related health conditions have serious economic costs. The  
6           medical burden of obesity in the United States is approximately \$147 billion  
7           annually, or almost 10 percent of all medical spending. Roughly one-half of  
8           these costs are paid through Medicare and Medicaid, which means that  
9           taxpayers are responsible for much of the bill. Medicare and Medicaid  
10          spending would be reduced by 8.5 percent and 11.8 percent, respectively, in  
11          the absence of obesity-related spending. Obesity-related annual medical  
12          expenditures in Vermont are estimated at \$291 million.

13          (4) Families in Vermont have limited time to obtain and prepare healthy  
14          food, making dining out an appealing and often necessary option. Nationwide,  
15          American children eat 19 percent of their calories at fast food and other  
16          restaurants. Children eat almost twice as many calories when they eat a meal  
17          at a restaurant as they do when they eat at home. A 2013 study that examined  
18          the nutritional quality of children's meals sold at 18 of the most profitable fast  
19          food restaurant chains in the United States found that only three percent of the  
20          3,494 meal combinations assessed met the expert nutrition standards for  
21          children's meals.

1           (5) The General Assembly supports parents' efforts to feed their  
2           children healthfully by ensuring healthy meals are readily available to children  
3           in restaurants.

4           Sec. 2. 18 V.S.A. § 4359 is added to read:

5           § 4359. NUTRITION REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN'S MEALS

6           (a) A licensed restaurant shall only sell a children's meal that meets the  
7           following nutritional requirements:

8           (1) It contains not more than:

9                   (A) 600 calories;

10                   (B) 770 milligrams of sodium;

11                   (C) 35 percent of calories from total sugars;

12                   (D) 35 percent of calories from fat;

13                   (E) 10 percent of calories from saturated fat; and

14                   (F) 0.5 grams of trans fat.

15           (2) It includes at least 0.5 cups of unfried fruit or unfried vegetables,

16           excluding white potatoes, and at least one of the following:

17                   (A) a whole-grain product that contains not less than 51 percent by  
18           weight in whole-grain ingredients or lists whole grains as the first ingredient;

19                   (B) a lean protein, consisting of at least two ounces of meat; one

20           ounce of nuts, seeds, dry beans, or peas; or one egg; or

1           (3) at least 0.5 cups of nonfat or one percent milk or low-fat yogurt, or  
2           one ounce of reduced-fat cheese.

3           (b) For the purposes of this section, juices, condiments, and spreads shall  
4           not be considered fruits or vegetables.

5           (c) If a children's meal includes a beverage, that beverage shall be:

6           (1) water, sparkling water, or flavored water with no added natural or  
7           artificial sweeteners;

8           (2) milk or dairy alternative; or

9           (3) 100 percent juice with no added sweeteners in a serving size of not  
10          more than eight ounces.

11          (d) As used in this section:

12          (1) "Children's meal" means a combination of food items or food and  
13          beverage items that are sold together at a single price and primarily intended  
14          for consumption by children.

15          (2) "Lean protein" means a food containing less than 10 grams of fat,  
16          4.5 grams or less of saturated fat, and less than 95 milligrams of cholesterol per  
17          100 grams and per labeled serving.

18          Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

19          This act shall take effect on July 1, 2019.