

H.65 bill introduction – Food allergies – Rep. John Killacky

What is the goal/purpose/issue the bill is addressing?

Several states including – [Massachusetts](#), Michigan, Rhode Island and Virginia – have enacted laws to improve food allergy safety and awareness in restaurants. Designed to make it safer for individuals with food allergies to dine in restaurants, these laws include provisions like notices on menus asking patrons to inform the server about any food allergies; food allergy training for restaurant managers; and procedures to inform customers, upon request, of the presence of major food allergens in menu items.

How is this bill related or connected to a response to the pandemic? Why now? What makes this an issue that the HHS committee should take up now?

Families with food sensitivities are hesitant to access take out services from area restaurants during this time, and clarity around food allergies would encourage these families to dine out with more restaurants.

Please summarize the bill, we don't want a walk through, just a summary.

- Adding allergen awareness training requirements for a Certified Food Protection Manager.
- Requiring restaurants to include on all printed menus and menu boards a clear and conspicuous notice requesting a customer notify the server, before placing an order, about the customer's allergy to a major food allergen.
- Requiring restaurants to have a procedure in place for informing customers of the presence of major food allergens in menu items, upon customer request.

If we were to take up your bill, who are the “interested parties” (i.e., who would the committee need to hear from?)

- Food Allergy Community
- Chamber of Commerce (VT Chamber – Charles Martin)
- Restaurant Owners

Independent restaurant operators expressed concerns about the potential for increased regulatory and administrative burdens as well as about the cost implications related to menu content changes and staff training, which would be necessary if the proposal moved forward.

If this bill becomes law, how will you know that it is having its intended benefit; what will be different and for whom?

Individuals with food allergies and their families are often reluctant to dine out if they are unsure that a restaurant can accommodate their needs. While the food allergy community recognizes that training and education do not guarantee safety, training can help to decrease the risk of accidental exposure to the allergen. This in turn may encourage those affected by food allergies to consider dining out.

You will have 7-10 minutes to introduce each bill; please no advocates or lobbyists at this time.

Please read more about what other states are doing about Restaurant legislation [here](#).

Information on Massachusetts legislation can be found [here](#) and more specifically, the MA bill can be found [here](#).

Rhode Island created their bill based on Massachusetts bill, but even included some more. The RI bill can be found [here](#).