

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
Buffy Wicks, Chair
SB 977 (Weber Pierson) – As Amended June 15, 2026

Policy Committee: Health

Vote: 15 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: Yes

SUMMARY:

This bill requires a chain restaurant that sells a children's meal to offer at least one children's meal that meets specified nutrition standards.

More specifically, this bill:

- 1) Requires a chain restaurant that sells a children's meal to offer at least one children's meal that meets the requirements of this bill.
- 2) Prohibits a children's meal offered pursuant to this bill from containing more than any of the following: 550 calories, 700 milligrams of sodium, 10% of calories from saturated fat, 15 grams of added sugar, and zero grams of trans fat.
- 3) Requires a children's meal offered pursuant to this bill to include at least two of the following:
 - a) One-half cup or more of fruit, including 100% fruit juice.
 - b) One-half cup or more of vegetables.
 - c) One-half cup or more nonfat or low-fat dairy.
 - d) At least one of the following servings of protein:
 - i) One ounce of meat, poultry, or seafood.
 - ii) One egg.
 - iii) One-fourth cup of soy products or pulses, including beans, peas, or lentils.
 - iv) Two tablespoons of nut butter.
 - v) One ounce of nuts and seeds.
 - e) Eight or more grams of whole grains, as defined.

- 4) Requires, on or before July 1, 2027, a chain restaurant that sells a children's meal to include information on how to comply with the requirements of this bill during employee training.
- 5) Defines, for purposes of this bill, "chain restaurant" to mean a restaurant or similar retail food establishment that is part of a chain with 20 or more locations doing business under the same name and offering for sale substantially the same menu items, regardless of the type of ownership of the locations.

FISCAL EFFECT:

The California Association of Environmental Health Administrators (CAEHA) anticipates the need for local environmental health agencies to hire specially trained staff to conduct the inspections, at a cost in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to \$1 million per year, per jurisdiction, for a statewide total in the millions of dollars per year. CAEHA notes that due to the ubiquity of fast food restaurants, the workload to analyze their menus for compliance will be intense, especially in urban areas. If the Commission on State Mandates determines this bill imposes a reimbursable mandate, the state will be required to reimburse local governments for the costs of enforcing this bill (General Fund).

No costs to the California Department of Public Health.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is sponsored by the American Heart Association and the American Diabetes Association. According to the author:

As a physician, I've seen the alarming impact of poor nutrition on children's health, and as a mother, I know how challenging it can be to find healthy options when dining out...[O]ur state faces a childhood obesity crisis, and we must take action now to reverse these trends.

This bill will require chain restaurants to offer healthier meal options for children, helping families make better food choices when dining out. By setting clear nutritional standards and providing training for restaurant employees, we are making it easier for parents to provide healthy meals for their kids, no matter where they eat. This bill will help ensure that children's meals not only meet basic nutritional standards but also support their long-term health.

- 2) **Background.** SB 1420 (Padilla), Chapter 600, Statutes of 2008, requires a chain restaurant disclose to consumers specified nutritional information, including the calorie content, for all standard menu items. Subsequently, as part of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (ACA), the federal government enacted a similar requirement, and the state menu labeling law was repealed to have California conform to the federal requirements. The federal law requires chain restaurants disclose, among other things, the calorie content in standard items on menus and menu boards, and for self-service foods and foods on display, the calories must be listed in close proximity and clearly associated with the standard menu item. The restaurants must also provide, upon request, the following written information for standard menu items: total calories, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, total

carbohydrates, sugars, fiber, and protein.

The National Restaurant Association launched Kids LiveWell (KLW) in 2011 to help parents and children select healthier menu options when dining out. The National Restaurant Association “relaunched” this effort in 2021 to better align with current nutrition science. Restaurants participating in KLW agree to offer at least two children’s meals (compared to just one under this bill) that meet the specified criteria. The limits on calories, calories from saturated fat, added sugars, and sodium, as well as the exclusion of trans fat are the same in this bill and KLW. Likewise, both KLW and this bill require the meals to include servings from at least two of five specified food groups, and that at least one of the servings must be a fruit or vegetable, with 100% fruit juice meeting the requirement for a 1/2-cup serving of fruit.

- 3) **Implementation Concern.** Recent amendments removed the requirement for a symbol that would designate the children’s menu item that is compliant with the provisions of this bill. CAEHA states that, without the symbol, it will be very time-intensive for inspectors to review all the permutations of menu items that would satisfy the requirements of this bill. CAEHA further contends inspectors are trained in food safety, not nutritional analysis, so either inspectors will need significant new training or counties will need to hire nutrition-trained staff.

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