



**INTERFAITH  
PUBLIC HEALTH**  
— NETWORK —

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Food Justice  
*as* Social Mission  
*in the* Methodist Spirit

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**Saturday, 3/1/2025**  
**11am to 2pm ET**

11:00 - 11:10	Welcome, Prayer, Introduction, & Agenda - <i>Home Missioners Jeffrey Murrell &amp; Bob Pezzolesi</i>
11:10 - 11:35	Wesley, Food Justice, & Health – <i>Dr. Gregory Van Buskirk</i>
11:35 - 11:45	Food Systems 101 – <i>Kelly Moltzen</i>
11:45 – 11:50	Questions/Brief Discussion - <i>All</i>
11:50 – 12:00	Relevant UMC Social Principles – <i>Home Missioner Bob Pezzolesi</i>
12:00 - 12:05	Break
12:00 - 12:10	Check-In/Questions/Brief Discussion - <i>All</i>
12:10 - 12:25	A Big Part of the Problem: Ultra-Processed Products – <i>Bob Pezzolesi</i>
12:25 - 12:40	A Big Picture Look at Food Systems and Public Health – <i>Kelly Moltzen</i>
12:40 - 12:50	Check-In/Questions/Brief Discussion - <i>All</i>
12:50 - 1:00	Policy Solutions – <i>Bob Pezzolesi</i>
1:00 - 1:05	Break
1:05 - 1:30	Break-out Groups - <i>All</i>
1:30 - 1:45	Report Outs - <i>All</i>
1:45 - 1:55	Where Do We Go From Here? Hope in the Fog – <i>Bob Pezzolesi and All</i>
1:55 - 2:00	Closing Comments and Closing Prayer



# Food Systems 101

# The Food System



source: <https://action-lab.org/food-stories/definition-for-key-terms/>

# The Industrial Food System

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- Maximizes production and reduces cost, function much like factories
- Built for scale and efficiency; creates “externalized” costs
- Consolidation of farms and food processing facilities
- Life on a family farm has become more challenging and less financially viable
- In rural communities, most profits no longer remains local and instead go to large conglomerates

source: <https://foodprint.org/the-total-footprint-of-our-food-system/issues/the-industrial-food-system/>

# The Industrial Food System

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- Land degradation contributes to malnutrition, disease, forced migration, and social conflicts
- Industrial agriculture has not been shown to address food insecurity
- Food systems from industrial agriculture are failing the food producers themselves



source: Thompson, Joseph. Environmental and Social Impacts of Agricultural Biodiversity Degradation from the Ultra-Processed Food Industry.

# Public Health Impacts

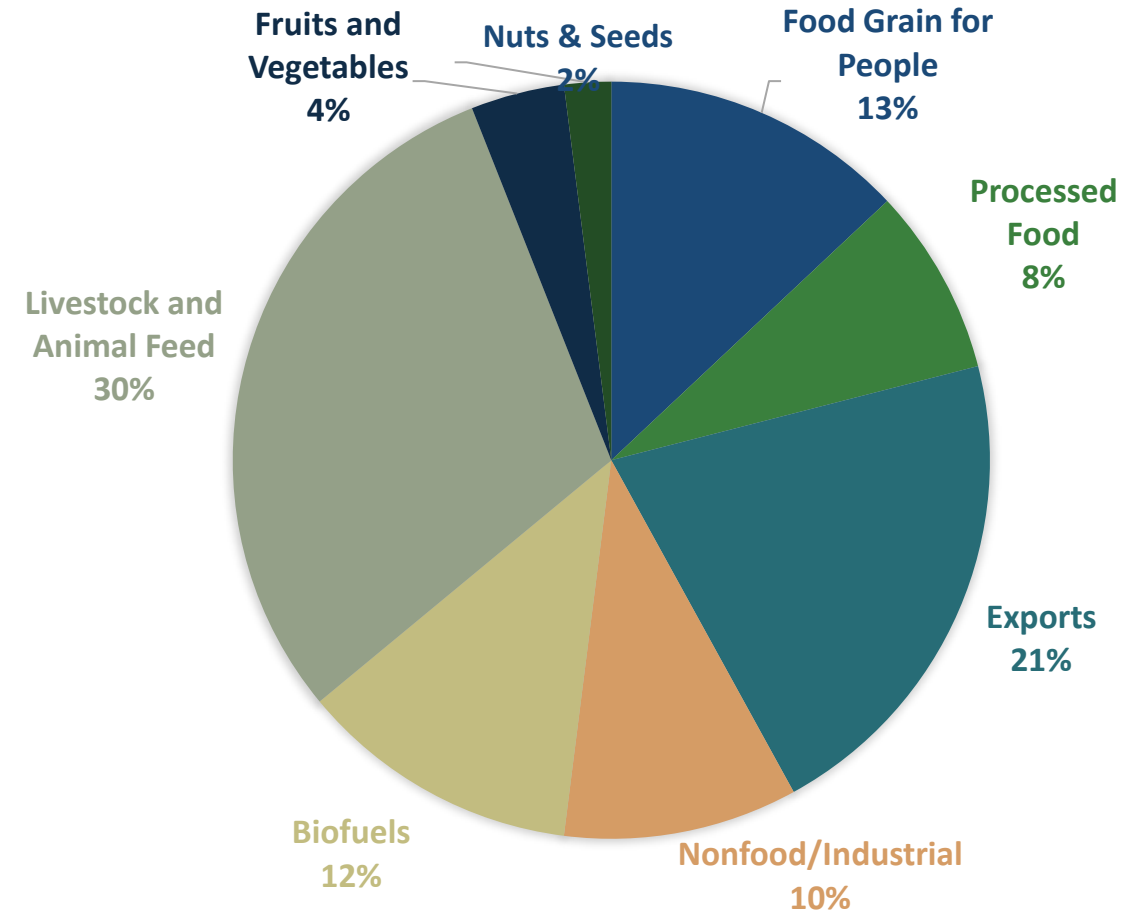
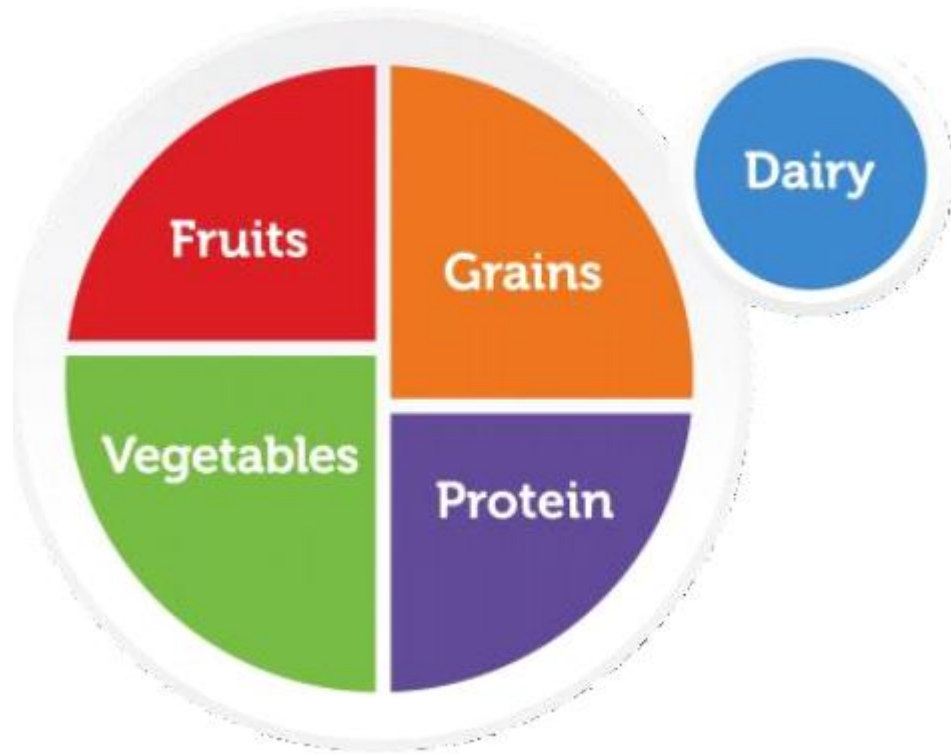
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- Overcrowding on factory farms; the ammonia-filled hen houses; the monocropped fields of corn, soy and produce that rely heavily on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, which are linked to multiple health problems
- Environmental degradation to our air, water and soil quality from animal waste and agricultural runoff
- Excess of inexpensive, low nutrient food
- Increased risk of respiratory problems, workplace injuries and certain cancers for farm and factory laborers who maintain these large-scale farms.
- Antibiotics overuse on farms has increased the threat of antibiotic resistance and infectious disease transmission.

source: <https://foodprint.org/the-total-footprint-of-our-food-system/issues/public-health/>



# U.S. Dietary Guidelines Don't Align with Subsidies



Source: <https://www.myplate.gov/> and <https://farmaction.us/subsidies-sources/>





# Relevant UMC Social Principles

## A. Environmental Racism

We confess that the negative impacts resulting from the degradation of the natural world have fallen disproportionately on marginalized communities, including indigenous tribes, religious and ethnic communities, people living in poverty, and other vulnerable groups. We, therefore, pledge to resist all forms of environmental exploitation, neglect and inequality. These practices condemn impoverished communities and developing countries to bear the brunt of hazardous environments, industrial pollution, toxic waste dumps and urban decay. Such behaviors constitute environmental racism. We oppose policies and practices that relegate marginalized communities to a permanent underclass status and ignore indigenous and other sources of communal wisdom, which call for air, land, and water to be treated with profound respect.

Additionally, these groups suffer disproportionately from higher rates of asthma, cancer, birth defects and other preventable medical conditions. These health problems are associated with pollutants and other chemicals in soil, water and air that affect our drinking water, foods and physical environment. We urge governments, businesses, and civic institutions to give priority to increasing access to prevention and treatment services.

**UMC Social Principles  
2020/2024**

### C. Food Justice

Food systems that are ecologically sustainable, locally oriented, and equitably distributed are urgent priorities. We endorse policies and practices designed to ensure access to healthy nourishment and clean drinking water, especially for communities that have been subjected to environmental degradation or deprived of adequate resources to produce or purchase their own food.

We also affirm food sovereignty, which promotes the rights of all people to healthy, culturally appropriate food, produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. We support local control of food production, which entails providing opportunities for local communities to participate meaningfully in decisions about the kinds of livestock to be raised and crops to be grown. We reject agricultural policies and practices that make food inaccessible to agricultural workers and the communities in which the food is produced. We advocate for strong protections of the land, food, and water rights of indigenous peoples.

**UMC Social Principles  
2020/2024**

### C. Food Justice

We oppose the patenting of seed varieties and other organisms traditionally used in farming and agriculture. The rapidly expanding practice of patenting seed varieties and charging farmers for their use has reduced access to traditional crops and increased the indebtedness of subsistence and smaller-scale farms. Consequently, we support cooperative, open-source efforts aimed at making traditional seed varieties available to those who need them.

We also call for the creation of policies that reduce carbon-intensive agricultural methods, which increase climate change. Producers must be responsible for their adverse impact on food packaging, distribution and transport, and seek the safety and well-being of agricultural and food processing workers.

## D. Caring for All Creatures





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Animals raised for human consumption should be provided with healthy living conditions and sufficient food and water. Animals raised for human consumption must likewise be reared in humane conditions and slaughtered in a manner that minimizes their overall suffering and pain.



# A Big Part of the Problem: Ultra-Processed Products

## NOVA Food classification

Unprocessed or minimally processed foods	Processed culinary ingredients	Processed foods	Ultra-processed foods
<p>Foods which did not undergo processing or underwent minimal processing techniques, such as fractioning, grinding, pasteurization and others.</p> 	<p>These are obtained from minimally processed foods and used to season, cook and create culinary dishes.</p> 	<p>These are unprocessed or minimally processed foods or culinary dishes which have been added processed culinary ingredients. They are necessarily industrialized.</p> 	<p>These are food products derived from foods or parts of foods, being added cosmetic food additives not used in culinary.</p> 
<p>Legumes, vegetables, fruits, starchy roots and tubers, grains, nuts, beef, eggs, chicken, milk</p>	<p>Salt, sugar, vegetable oils, butter and other fats.</p>	<p>Bottled vegetables or meat in salt solution, fruits in syrup or candied, bread, cheeses, purees or pastes.</p>	<p>Breast milk substitutes, infant formulas, cookies, ice cream, shakes, ready-to-eat meals, soft drinks and other sugary drinks, hamburgers, nuggets.</p>



# Harms associated with higher UPF/UPP consumption

- All-cause mortality<sup>1, 2,3</sup>
- Cardiovascular disease<sup>1,2,4</sup>
- Cerebrovascular disease<sup>1,4</sup>
- Hypertension<sup>1</sup>
- Type 2 diabetes<sup>6,7</sup>
- Excess body weight/overweight/obesity<sup>1,2</sup>
- Body fat during childhood/adolescence<sup>3</sup>
- Dyslipidemia in children<sup>2</sup>
- Gestational obesity<sup>1</sup>
- Metabolic syndrome<sup>1,2</sup>
- Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD)<sup>9</sup>
- Cancer (overall) <sup>1,2,8</sup>
- Postmenopausal breast cancer<sup>1,2,8</sup>
- Colorectal cancer<sup>8</sup>
- Pancreatic cancer<sup>8</sup>
- Adverse sleep related outcomes<sup>6</sup>
- Depression<sup>1,2,4,5,6</sup>
- Anxiety<sup>5,6</sup>
- Frailty<sup>1,2</sup>
- Asthma and wheezing (in adolescents)<sup>1</sup>
- Functional dyspepsia<sup>2</sup>
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)<sup>1</sup>

# How ultra-processed foods captured the baby and toddler market

Experts call for more scrutiny of these foods for the smallest and most vulnerable Americans



Adobe



By **Sarah Todd** Feb. 26, 2025

Reporter, Commercial Determinants of Health

The foods we eat as young children help set the course for the rest of our lives. Regular doses of peanut butter and eggs before age 1 can help prevent food allergies. A baby who gnaws on spinach and soft bouquets of broccoli, with their slightly bitter flavors, is more likely to enjoy vegetables as an adult.

As for what happens when babies and toddlers grow up on ultra-processed foods — well, that's what health experts are increasingly worried about.

# Ultra-Processed Products as Focus

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## Strengths:

- “Organizing principle” which appears to be “fit-for-purpose”
- Helps to point to broader food system
- NO studies show benefits to consuming UPPs

## Limitations:

- Some difficulty in definitions\*
- Long-term scientific
- Legal regulatory structures would need to evolve





# A Big Picture Look at Food Systems and Public Health

# Key Definitions

Food security: access by all people at all times to **enough food** for an active, healthy life.

Nutrition security: all Americans have **consistent access to the safe, healthy, affordable foods essential to optimal health and well-being.**

Food sovereignty: the **right of Peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.**

# Reducetarianism

## What is reducetarianism?

Reducetarianism is the practice of eating less meat - red meat, poultry, and seafood - as well as less dairy and fewer eggs, regardless of the degree or motivation. This concept is appealing because not everyone is willing to follow an "all-or-nothing" diet. However, reducetarianism is still inclusive of vegans, vegetarians, and anyone else who reduces the amount of animal products in their diet

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## Why reduce?

Eating fewer animal products reduces your risk of heart disease and certain types of cancers, decreases your carbon footprint and the suffering of farmed animals, and even alleviates the global food and water crises.

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Source: <https://www.reducetarian.org/faq>



# Interfaith Campaign for Food and Nutrition Security

White House Challenge to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities

Working together to ensure that everyone has access to sufficient, nourishing food to maintain health and livelihoods

Raising awareness about opportunities to advance goals outlined in the National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition and Health:

- Pillar 1: Improve food access and affordability
- Pillar 2: Integrate nutrition and health
- Pillar 3: Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices

Campaign webpage:

<https://alliancetoendhunger.org/programs/interfaith-campaign-for-food-and-nutrition-security/>





# Faith and Food Coalition

## Interfaith Statement Principles

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1. **Interdependence.** Human health is linked to the health of the Earth. We affirm the adoption of the One Health model to create nutritious and climate-resilient food systems.
2. **Truth.** Science and faith are not at odds. They inform, enrich, complement, and challenge each other in the pursuit of truth.
3. **Reverence.** Our traditions teach us that the Earth and the food it provides is sacred and serves to nourish our minds and bodies. We must reconnect our rituals with an ethical and ecologically sound food system with minimal food waste.
4. **Respect.** We must respect and protect the wisdom of Indigenous traditions on sustainable ecosystems, healthy food systems, and safeguarding biodiversity.
5. **Compassion.** Ensure that marginalized communities and workers at risk of being left behind are centered and uplifted as part of a just recovery and sustainability initiatives
6. **Solidarity.** We only have one common planetary home, and all life is dependent upon it. We should set aside our differences to work together as one human family for the common good
7. **Empowerment.** Resilience lies within us, our communities, ecosystems, and our faith traditions.



# Faith and Food Coalition

## Interfaith Statement Actions

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1. **Committing** to the equitable transformation of food systems that centers indigenous and smallholder farmers at the heart of our development
2. **Investing** in innovative, evidence-based solutions from Indigenous and faith communities and the organizations that support them, targeted at building the food systems' resilience without acquiescing to corporate capture of critical infrastructure.
3. **Providing** policy, innovation, educational, and business opportunities for underrepresented food system actors, uplifting traditional agriculture in research methodology.
4. **Building** critical alliances among farmers, businesses, NGOs, governments, Indigenous communities, and faith groups.
5. **Restoring** degraded land and protecting ecosystems while connecting farmers to fair and equitable markets to produce better health, social, economic, and ecological outcomes.
6. **Incentivizing** and subsidizing healthy, climate resilient, nutritious, local plant-based foods growing practices to allow competitiveness with global markets at the local level.

# Faith and Food Coalition

## Interfaith Statement Actions

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7. **Re-aligning** tax systems to drive immediate changes, such as taxing foods that lead to undesirable health outcomes, as well as taxing excessive plastic packaging, particularly the single use plastics that are embedded into industrial food delivery systems
8. **Regulating** the marketing of food and beverages to children, preventing non-nutritious, chemically dominated foods from being sold as healthy substitutes to real food.
9. **Protecting**, supporting and promoting breastfeeding, which is the first food system that provides the ideal first food to the most vulnerable human beings.
10. **Promoting** and encouraging the local generation of knowledge to address food security, empowering farmers and youth, as the agents of change to play an active role in creating solutions that address the context and reality of local needs.
11. **Guaranteeing** food security through sustainability, nutrition, and equity rather than chasing untested biotechnologies and GMOs to augment food systems, innovating with a moral compass.

# Food & Faith Training

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<https://divinity.wfu.edu/>



# Food & Faith Training

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# Action and Implementation

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# Growing Support for Local Farmers & Sustainable Agriculture

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<https://www.foodcap.org/>



# Convenings

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<https://www.mtso.edu/>

# Growing More Food on Religiously Owned Land

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# Communal Meals for Community and Skill-Building

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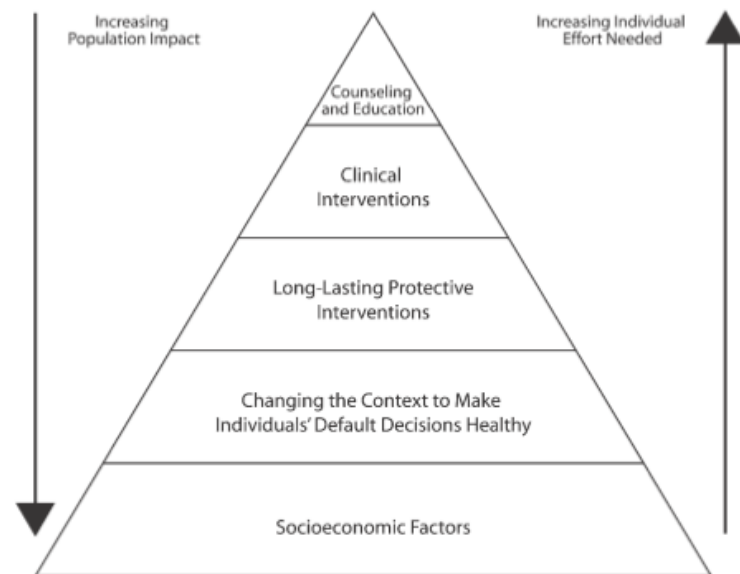
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Source: <https://www.reducetarian.org/faq>



# Policy Solutions



**FIGURE 1—The health impact pyramid.**

N O U R I S					H	I N G
FOOD ENVIRONMENT					FOOD SYSTEM	BEHAVIOUR CHANGE COMMUNICATION
POLICY AREA						
N	Nutrition label standards and regulations on the use of claims and implied claims on food					
O	Offer healthy food and set standards in public institutions and other specific settings					
U	Use economic tools to address food affordability and purchase incentives					
R	Restrict food advertising and other forms of commercial promotion					
I	Improve nutritional quality of the whole food supply					
S	Set incentives and rules to create a healthy retail and food service environment					
H	Harness food supply chain and actions across sectors to ensure coherence with health					
I	Inform people about food and nutrition through public awareness					
N	Nutrition advice and counselling in health care settings					
G	Give nutrition education and skills					

# Community Food Policy Campaign Opportunities



**Predatory  
Marketing  
Prevention  
Act**

**S397  
A2584**

**Excessive  
Sodium  
Warning  
Labels**

**S428  
A5207**

**Sweet Truth  
Added  
Sugar  
Warning  
Labels**

**S427  
A5305**

**Food Safety  
and  
Chemical  
Disclosure  
Act**

**S1239A  
A1556A**





# Predatory Marketing Prevention Act

## S397 / A2584 (Sen. Zellnor Myrie / AM Karines Reyes)

### What it does:

Helps define and restrict predatory marketing of unhealthy food aimed at young people. False and misleading advertising of food products is already illegal under NYS Law. This bill would expand the definition of “false and misleading” to include advertising of unhealthy food specifically marketed to young people.

### Current legislative status:

#### *Senate:*

Passed Senate Agriculture Committee (2/4/25).  
Now in Senate Consumer Protection Committee.  
(Also, passed Senate last year.)

#### *Assembly:*

In Committee (Consumer Affairs and Protection)



# OPINION

## Opinion: It's time to fight back against fast-food ads preying on our kids



Our bill would help protect children and other vulnerable New Yorkers from fast-food companies that want to exploit communities of color for profit.

*BY ZELNOR MYRIE AND KARINES REYES* FEBRUARY 28, 2025

<https://www.cityandstateny.com/opinion/2025/02/opinion-its-time-fight-back-against-fast-food-ads-preying-our-kids/403382/>

# Excessive Sodium Warning Labels

S428 / A5207 (Sen. Gustavo Rivera / AM Karines Reyes)

## What it does:

Requires warning labels on menu boards/signs in chain restaurants for items/combo with more than a day's worth (2300 mg) of sodium.

Essentially, extends NYC policy (instituted in 2015) statewide.

## Current legislative status:

### Senate:

Passed Senate Health Committee (1/21/25)  
and is currently on Senate Floor Calendar.  
(Also, passed Senate last year.)

### Assembly:

In Committee (Health)



*Panera Chicken Green Goddess Caprese Melt  
(on baguette)*  
**2420 mg sodium**



*Chipotle Salad with chicken (no cheese)*  
**2480 mg sodium**



# Sweet Truth – Added Sugars Warning Labels

S427 / A5305 (Sen. Gustavo Rivera / AM Karines Reyes)

## What it does:

Requires warning labels on menu boards/signs in chain restaurants – and at point of beverage dispensing - for items/combos with more than a day’s worth (50g or 12 ½ tsp) of added sugars.

Essentially, extends NYC policy (set to start in October 2025) statewide.

## Current legislative status:

Senate:  
In Committee (Health)

Assembly:  
In Committee (Health)



Small Hi-C® Orange Lavaburst®  
56 g. (16 tsps.) added sugars



Dunkin’ Triple Mocha  
Frozen Coffee, Large  
159 g. (over 45 tsps.) added sugars

**SUGAR WARNING** Item exceeds half the Daily Value for added sugars based on a 2,000 calorie diet. The U.S. Dietary Guidelines advises limiting added sugars.

2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice, but calorie needs vary.

### BEVERAGES

FOUNTAIN DRINKS & WATER		FRUIT SMOOTHIES	
Pepsi 150 calories	0.99	Mango Smoothie	
Diet Pepsi 0 calories	0.99	Kids' 210 calories	2.99
Mountain Dew 170 calories	0.99	Regular 260 calories	3.99
Sierra Mist 140 calories	0.99	Strawberry Banana Smoothie	
Brisk Iced Tea 70 calories	0.99	Kids' 240 calories	2.99
Lemonade 150 calories	0.99	Regular 280 calories	3.99
Bottled Water 0 calories	0.99		
		ICED TEA	
		Regular 0 calories	0.99
		Mango 80 calories	3.59
		Kiwi 70 calories	3.59
		Raspberry 80 calories	3.59
		Pomegranate 70 calories	3.59

# Food Safety and Chemical Disclosure Act

**S397 / A2584** (Sen. Brian Kavanaugh / AM Dr. Anna Kelles)

## What it does:

1. **Removes health-harming chemicals from NYS foods**, including red dye 3,\* propylparabens and potassium bromate. These chemicals have already been banned in California and are not allowed in several other nations, including the European Union, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, China, and Japan.
2. **Removes artificial food dyes from NYS public school foods**. These dyes have not been allowed for use in New York City public school meals for several years and were recently banned in public schools in California.
3. **Establishes chemical additive transparency in the NYS food supply** by requiring that companies notify the state of NY if they use a regulatory loophole to market chemical additives in food without notifying FDA. This notification would include a summary of the company's evidence and assessment establishing the chemical's safety. These notices would then be published in a publicly available database funded by reporting fees and maintained by the state.

## Current legislative status:

*Senate:*

In Committee (Agriculture)

*Assembly:*

In Committee (Agriculture)

Will also pass through  
Education committees

**\*Sponsors actively working to  
include bill in the NYS  
FY2026 Budget\***



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# Healthy Restaurant Kids' Meal Bill (NYS)

S2866 – 2023/2024 (Sen. Rivera – no Assembly same-as)



American  
Heart  
Association®

## NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR ALL RESTAURANT KIDS' MEAL COMBINATIONS

Require kids' meals at restaurants meet expert nutrition standards. Nutrition standards can be tailored to the needs of a community, with deference to the foodways of the locality.

### CALORIES

< 600

### CALORIES FROM SATURATED FAT

< 10%

### ADDED SUGARS

NO MORE THAN  
10% OF CALORIES

### SODIUM

< 700 mg

## FOOD GROUPS

Meals must include at least two of the following and at least one of the two food groups must be a fruit or vegetable.

### FRUIT

≥ ½ cup

### NON/LOW-FAT DAIRY

≥ 1 cup

### WHOLE GRAINS

½ serving  
(first ingredient a whole grain or ≥ 50%  
whole grains by weight of product)

### VEGETABLE

≥ ½ cup



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# Policy Steps

- 1. New York State – join our interfaith coalition!**
- 2. Other states – growing opportunities**
- 3. What policies would you like to see implemented?**



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# Questions for Break Out Groups

- 1. How can you most effectively address food justice issues – including food and nutrition security AND systems change - in your ministry contexts? (including mission, local church, UWF units, etc.)**
- 2. What are the next practical steps you can take toward this goal?**



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# Principles

## What it does:

1. **All or nothing is a trap.** We humans like to think in binaries. Most of the time, this gets into trouble. We end up giving up.
2. **And, some foods are just junk.** Some well-meaning nutritionists will say “There are no junk foods, just junk patterns of eating.” In reality,
3. **Shaming individual people doesn’t work.** These foods are designed to be addictive and are aggressively marketed. Shaming ourselves or others for eating them just makes us feel bad, and then we are tempted to eat more to feel better!

## What it does:

1. **Shifting our patterns – aiming for progress and not perfection.**  
Fruits vegetables
2. **Less processing is better.**
3. **Rooting in our spiritual values**