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UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DELAURO

3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

CO-CHAIR, DEMOCRATIC STEERING AND
POLICY COMMITTEE

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AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION,
AND RELATED AGENCIES

June 3, 2015

The Honorable Joe Pitts, Chairman
The Honorable Gene Green, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman Pitts and Ranking Member Green,

A wealth of research shows that consumers make wiser health decisions when they have more information at their disposal. Our new menu labeling requirement will empower Americans to make more informed decisions about the food they eat—at the point of purchase. This is all the more important given that families now eat out more than twice as much as they did in 1970. An estimated one-third of calories are now consumed—and almost half of total food dollars are now spent—at restaurants and similar retail food establishments. Research shows that, where menu-labeling has taken effect, people who saw the calorie information select food with fewer calories.

Access to this nutrition information is more important than ever to our national health, well-being, and economic future. Even as adult obesity has doubled in recent years, we have seen child obesity triple—to the point where one in every three children or adolescents in our nation is now overweight or obese. We have waited over a decade to implement national menu labeling standards, delaying implementation any further will continue to leave consumers in the dark, making it difficult to make informed food consumption decisions.

Menu labeling is a simple reform that ensures families finally have access to the information they need to stay healthy, even when eating outside the home. The single, national standard provided by the law is also important, giving consumers consistent information from place to place as well as providing businesses with a uniform standard with which to comply. So it is no surprise that some large chains—like Dunkin Donuts, Subway, and McDonald's—are following the new requirements and already embraced these common-sense measures.

Providing unwarranted exceptions to supermarkets, convenience stores, pizza chains, movie theaters, and others would not only undermine the purpose of menu labeling—to give consumers more information about the food they eat—but would also create an uneven playing field for business competition. This is all the more reason why we need swift implementation by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) of our new menu labeling requirements.

Just as consumers embraced the nutrition information on packaged foods when Congress mandated it over 20 years ago, clear and upfront dietary and nutrition information at chain restaurants and similar food retailers will help Americans eat and live healthier lives. To do that, we have to make sure that our national menu labeling law is implemented and followed by all relevant retailers. Thank you for considering these views as you hear concerns from businesses impacted by the law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rosa L. DeLauro". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress