



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

July 2, 2009

The Honorable Susan Bysiewicz
Secretary of the State
18-20 Trinity Street
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Madam Secretary:

I am hereby returning without my signature Senate Bill 1080, *An Act Concerning Access to Health and Nutritional Information in Restaurants*.

There is no doubt that there is a growing obesity epidemic in this country and that childhood obesity is on the rise. Indeed, many medical conditions can be directly related to poor diets, such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and hypertension, to name a few. The solution however, is not nutrition labeling in chain restaurants.

Healthy lifestyles and good eating habits are personal decisions and commitments. Does it come as a surprise to anyone that a vegetable salad is healthier and more nutritious than a bacon cheeseburger? Legislation cannot force an individual to choose the vegetable salad over the bacon cheeseburger. Common sense and healthy habits must prevail, not "sounds good" but ineffectual legislation.

There has been a growing and troubling tendency by some to legislate nearly every aspect of our lives and our society, including personal responsibility. Such legislation always comes at a cost to the taxpayer and to individual freedom.

I am also concerned about the increasing burdens we place on Connecticut's businesses. Each one of these laws comes at a price for our businesses and our state. Laws are nothing without enforcement, and we are asking our State Department of Public Health and local health districts to inspect, report upon, and - if necessary - fine the establishments, with no extra resources afforded to them to carry out such duties. This is hardly the economic climate in which to further burden our businesses and state agencies.

I am mindful of the fact that the federal government may soon enact legislation that will provide national, uniform nutritional labeling standards for chain foodservice establishments. Specifically, the Labeling Education and Nutrition Act (LEAN Act) is under consideration by Congress. If enacted, *all* foodservice establishments will be required to provide the *same* information in *all* fifty states. Uniform, standard information is clearly better for consumers and businesses and more effective than a state-by-state hodgepodge of information.

For these reasons, and pursuant to Section 15 of Article Fourth of the Constitution of the State of Connecticut and Article III of the Amendments to the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, I must return Senate Bill 1080, *An Act Concerning Access to Health and Nutritional Information in Restaurants* without my signature.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Jodi Rell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "M." and last name "Rell" clearly visible.

M. Jodi Rell
Governor