

National Legislative Update

Menu Labeling Law Introduced:

FMI and other groups praised a bipartisan bill that would protect supermarkets from a requirement in the health care law that grocers provide the same nutrition labeling as restaurants.

Excerpts from FMI and Gov.com: On July 24, Rep. John Carter (R-TX) and a bipartisan group of cosponsors introduced legislation to reform the restaurant menu labeling requirements of the health care law and ensure that FDA does not broaden its scope in its rulemaking to include grocery stores and other food retailers. This bill aims to protect grocery stores from certain regulatory burdens and costs. The menu labeling provision was passed as part of the health care law to provide uniform, federal menu labeling regulations for chain restaurants, not grocery stores. The menu labeling reform bill, entitled the *Common Sense Nutrition Disclosure Act of 2012* (H.R. 6174), currently has 23 cosponsors.

Rep. Carter held a press conference outside the Capitol in the 95+ degree July heat, to coincide with the bill introduction alongside some of the bill cosponsors and food industry representatives. It was noted that over 95% of food items in grocery stores already provide nutrition labeling. FMI has a grassroots letter template that you can use to send to your Representative. It is available on their website (fmi.org).

The National Grocers Association (NGA) also has expressed interest and supported this bill. Quote taken from NGA Newsletter:

“NGA commends Rep. Carter for his leadership to ensure that the FDA does not exceed its authority under the statute by expanding this provision beyond chain restaurants,” explained NGA President and CEO Peter J. Larkin. The grocery industry group maintains that grocery stores aren’t comparable to chain restaurants, where menus and ingredients are uniform across the chain. By contrast, grocery stores’ ingredients and menus often change daily, according to the availability of fresh ingredients and products in their stores, so subjecting grocery stores to a law meant for chain restaurants doesn’t make sense, according to NGA.