

SENATE, No. 521

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator JOSEPH F. VITALE

District 19 (Middlesex)

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Turner

SYNOPSIS

Requires restaurants to provide healthy beverages with meals designated for children.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/16/2020)

1 **AN ACT** concerning children’s nutrition and supplementing Title 26
2 of the Revised Statutes.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. The obesity rate in the United States has sharply climbed,
9 with about a third of children nationwide deemed overweight or
10 obese. In New Jersey, 22.7 percent of adolescents are overweight
11 or obese, while 32.5 percent of children aged two to four in the
12 Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and
13 Children are overweight or obese. It is noteworthy that obese
14 children are at least twice as likely as non-obese children to become
15 obese adults.

16 b. Sugary drinks play a critical role in the obesity epidemic.
17 Sugary drinks, including soda, energy and sports drinks, sweetened
18 water, and fruit drinks, provide the largest source of daily calories
19 in the diets of American children ages two to 18. Each extra
20 serving of a sugar-sweetened beverage consumed by a child in one
21 day increases the child’s chance of becoming obese by 60 percent.

22 c. Obese children are at greater risk for numerous adverse
23 health consequences, including Type 2 diabetes, heart disease,
24 stroke, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, certain cancers,
25 asthma, low self-esteem, depression, and other debilitating diseases.
26 Sugary drinks are also linked to other health problems, including a
27 greater risk of cardiovascular disease in adolescents, higher blood
28 pressure in adolescents, dental cavities, and insufficient intake of
29 essential nutrients, including calcium, folate, iron, magnesium, and
30 vitamin A.

31 d. Families in New Jersey have limited time to obtain and
32 prepare healthy food, making dining out an appealing and often
33 necessary option. Nationwide, American children eat 19 percent of
34 their calories at fast-food and other restaurants, and children and
35 adolescents who eat at both fast-food and full-service restaurants
36 drink more sugary drinks and less milk.

37 e. Requiring restaurants to provide a healthy beverage as the
38 beverage automatically included in meals designated for children is
39 an effective way to improve the nutritional quality of these meals;
40 as an example, the Disney Corporation moved to this practice and,
41 in 2008, reported that 68 percent of beverage orders at its American
42 resorts included the healthier option.

43 f. Therefore, it is in the public’s interest to support parents’
44 efforts to nourish children with healthy options while dining in
45 restaurants..

46
47 2. As used in this act:

