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MENU LABELING POLL

CALIFORNIANS OVERWHELMINGLY SUPPORT MANDATORY MENU LABELING

OVERVIEW. On April 18, 2007, CCPHA released findings of a Field Research Corporation poll on Californians' knowledge of caloric, fat, and salt content in restaurant foods and their attitudes about requiring fast-food and chain restaurants to post nutritional information on menus and menu boards.

THE POLL. The public opinion poll, commissioned by CCPHA, was conducted from March 20 – 31, 2007 by telephone by the respected [Field Research Corporation](#) and included a representative sample of 523 registered California voters. The poll included [questions](#) asking respondents to indicate which menu item (of four choices) contains the fewest calories, the least salt, the most fat, or the most calories from a list of options typically offered by California chain restaurants and fast-food establishments. Respondents were also asked if they supported requiring fast-food and chain restaurants to post nutritional information on their menus and menu boards. For summary information, see the [Press Release](#) and [Press Kit](#).

THE FINDINGS. The poll found that a large majority (84%) of Californians support requiring fast-food and chain restaurants to post nutritional information on menus and menu boards. Support for mandatory menu labeling was strong among Democrats, Republicans, and Independents. The finding mirrors results of a 2004 Field Research Poll.

The poll also found that an overwhelming number of Californians are unable to identify from among typical fast-food and restaurant menu items those with the fewest calories, or the least salt, the most fat, or the most calories. Not a single respondent answered all four questions correctly. Less than 1 percent answered three of four questions correctly, only 5 percent answered two of the four questions correctly, and nearly 68 percent were unable to answer even one question correctly. Scores were equally poor regardless of education or income levels.

Results from the overall sample have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. See [poll results](#) for detailed findings.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS. Findings from this Field poll indicate strong support for requiring fast-food and chain restaurants to post nutritional information on menus and menu boards, a policy identical to legislation currently being considered in California ([SB 120, Padilla/Midgen](#)).



The findings of this poll show how difficult it is for consumers to know whether they are making healthier choices from restaurant menus without further information to aid them in those choices. Consumers simply have no way to know the calorie, fat or salt contents of most common restaurant foods. Even choices that sound healthier—such as a “Chicken Caesar Salad”—contain more fat than a choice that would seem to be the obvious high-fat leader, such as “Traditional Lasagna.”

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