



STATE OF TENNESSEE

PHIL BREDESEN
GOVERNOR

1 July 2009

The Honorable Ron Ramsey
Speaker of the Senate
1 Legislative Plaza
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: Senate Bill 1092

Dear Speaker Ramsey:

I am vetoing Senate Bill 1092.

Tennessee faces an epidemic of obesity that continues to grow at an alarming rate. The destructive effects of this epidemic include not only serious and sometimes life-threatening health complications for individuals, but also contribute directly to the uncontrolled explosion of health care costs and lost labor time in our state.

Unfortunately, this is an area in which Tennessee is a national leader. Just today, the non-profit, non-partisan Trust for America's Health released a report on obesity in the United States that paints a dismal picture of Tennessee in this area. The report found that 30% of Tennessee's adult population is obese—this is the fourth highest percentage in the country. Even more disturbingly, this study found that almost 37% of our children are obese—this is the fifth highest percentage of obese children. These levels of obesity have directly resulted in exceptionally high rates of obesity-related ailments—Tennessee has the third highest level of adult diabetes and the fourth highest level of hypertension in the nation.

This is a health and safety issue that we must begin to address. Providing consumers with accurate, easy to understand nutritional information about the content of the food they are purchasing is a common-sense measure that could help Tennessee address its obesity epidemic. SB 1092, by seeking to prohibit Tennessee counties and municipalities from requiring restaurants to provide nutritional information to their customers would irresponsibly limit our state's ability to fight this epidemic.

I cannot sign such an unwise limitation into law, and I encourage the General Assembly to reconsider this issue during next year's legislative session.

Respectfully,

Phil Bredesen

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