



Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance Opposition Testimony on House Bill 364

February 25, 2026

Chair Klopfenstein, Vice Chair Newman, Ranking Member Miller and Members of the House Agriculture Committee:

On behalf of Ohio's more than 25,000 restaurant and foodservice locations and Ohio's 564,000 restaurant and foodservice workers, the Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance (ORHA) appreciates the opportunity to provide opposition testimony on House Bill 364.

Diligent thought and work go into designing a menu. Operators need to figure out how many items to have on the menu, how to describe an item, how to list ingredients, what size of menu is too daunting, and what array of options is too limiting. From large chains to family-operated restaurants, operators of all sizes carefully consider each of these factors when designing the menus their guests ultimately see. However, House Bill 364 threatens to upend all that careful consideration with verbose and obtrusive sodium warnings about information already available to customers, and by instilling a false sense of security in patrons with allergy concerns. While we share your goals of making sure that customers can make informed, conscious decisions, the approach in HB 364 is not a means to accomplish that goal.

Ohio Department of Health rules already require foodservice operations to have a trained Person in Charge (PIC) for each shift. This training includes allergen awareness education. Additionally, per Ohio Food Code, the PIC provides food allergen awareness for employees. For Ohioans with allergies, seeing which menu items carry what products might instill a false sense of security when selecting food options, potentially forgoing warning the server of their allergies. Kitchens are dynamic and complex environments. Without proper notice from an individual with allergies, kitchen staff may not know of a customer's allergies and could unintentionally risk cross contamination with one of the allergens, putting the customer and the restaurant at risk.

Regarding the recently amended language related to sodium warnings, chain restaurants with 20 or more locations nationally already must provide nutritional information, including sodium levels, when requested. Adding sodium warning labels creates a state patchwork of inconsistent thresholds and risks confusing customers when nutrition messages differ by state. The current language for the sodium warning forces chains to rework the entire menu with significantly smaller, and hard-to-read fonts. Requiring such a lengthy warning on qualifying items makes the menu illegible as space is already limited. Policymakers should prioritize consumer education and alignment with federal dietary guidance rather than state-specific warning symbols on crowded menus and menu boards.

Much of this bill would force restaurants to needlessly change their menus in a way that is obtrusive and unlikely to improve health outcomes. Person in Charge training requires someone on each shift to be trained on allergens and their menu. Federal law requires chains to provide nutritional information, including sodium content, when requested. For those concerned with the availability of this information, we are happy to work with you to find an approach for that concern. HB 364, however, is not that fix.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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Ohio Restaurant & Hospitality Alliance