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To: [Gilbert "B.J." Bowling](#); [Thomasina Coates](#); [Ralph Patterson](#); [Amanda Stewart](#); [Christina Elkins](#)
Subject: Subject: Save my children's menu – Healthy Children's Meals Legislation
Date: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 12:19:20 AM

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Board of Commissioners,

I operate The Charles Restaurant & Bar in La Plata and was able to listen into last night's hearing regarding the Healthy Meals for Children legislation. I applaud the Commissioners for adopting some amendments to make the bill more amendable to restaurants large and small. However, this legislation as currently drafted would still present significant challenges for small business.

Commissioner Stewart mentioned a key amendment that would make calculating the nutritional information for children menu items as optional. If not already adopted, the recommended amendment to introduce the 'optional language' would be incredibly beneficial.

Independent restaurants like mine are not subject to the federal menu labeling laws which require large chains to calculate nutritional information. Federal and State elected bodies in the past have recognized that small and independent restaurants do not have access to food scientists, dieticians, or nutrition calculators. Charles County has no shortage of mom & pop restaurants that would be adversely impacted if adopted.

That said, we at The Charles would gladly utilize our existing resources and exert our best effort to continue to meet these standards. But prefer to due so if they were suggested and rewarded with recognition rather than mandated (Sections G3 and G4 appear to accomplish the lions share of the recognition effort).

However, enforcement & punitive damages would present a financial burden to many of the small & long standing restaurants in Charles county. Many may elect not to have a children menu at all.

Thanks again for your support and service.

Sincerely,

Darrin Cunningham
Owner – The Charles Restaurant & Bar - La Plata