

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

04 JUL 27 P5:01

SENATE
S.B. No. 1523

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

EXPLANATORY NOTE

International and local medical researches have shown that a high dietary intake of saturated fat can lead to increased serum cholesterol levels which, in turn, can lead to Coronary Heart Disease (CHD). CHD is a killer disease in the Philippines and the number one killer disease in America.

To decrease the risk of acquiring the disease, private and public studies by experts in the fields of medicine and nutrition unanimously support the conclusion that the people should know how much fat, particularly saturated fat, they consume and should guard against too much consumption of fat in general and saturated fat in particular.

Republic Act No. 7394 or the "Consumer Act of the Philippines," Articles 77 and 84 provides for the minimum labeling requirements for consumer products and additional labeling requirements for food, respectively. However, these provisions on labeling requirements do not expressly require information on the fat and cholesterol content of foods. Thus, not all consumer food products contain such information.


This bill therefore seeks to provide consumers with more information on the fat and cholesterol content of foods through improved labeling.


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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AN ACT
TO PRESCRIBE LABELING REQUIREMENTS
FOR FOODS WHICH CONTAIN SATURATED FAT AND CHOLESTEROL

Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “Low Cholesterol Consumer Education Act.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* — It is the policy of the State to protect the interests of the consumer, promote his general welfare and to establish standards of conduct for business and industry. Towards this end, the State shall implement measures to achieve the following objectives:

- (1) protection against hazards to health and safety; and
- (2) provision of information and education to facilitate sound choice and the proper exercise of rights by the consumer;

The State shall therefore, enforce compulsory labeling and fair packaging to enable the consumer to obtain accurate information as to the nature, quality and quantity of the contents of consumer products and to facilitate his/ her comparison of the value of such products.

SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* — For purposes of this Act, the terms:

- (1) “Saturated Fat” refers to one of the basic groups of fats separated chemically (the other being the unsaturated fat). Intake of the saturated type of fat has been shown to raise the level of cholesterol in the blood;

(2) "Cholesterol" refers to a sterol found in animal tissue in combination with triglycerides and protein-bound phospholipids. It is a precursor to the formation of the Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL), high levels of which in the blood, leads to coronary heart disease.

Cholesterol can be found primarily in fats and particularly in animal fats, eggs and dairy products.

(3) "Label, labeling" refers to the display of written, printed or graphic matter on any consumer product or its immediate container, tag, literature or other suitable material affixed thereto for the purpose of giving information as to identity, components, ingredients, attributes, directions for use, specifications and such other information as may be required by law or regulations; and

(4) "Standards" refers to a set of conditions to be fulfilled to ensure the quality and safety of a product.

SECTION 4. *Standards.* —

Not later than one hundred eighty (180) days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health shall establish and publish the following:

(1) Standards for the recommended maximum daily levels of total fat, total saturated fat, and cholesterol in total dietary intake, expressed as a percentage of calories from fat and total grams of fat, and

(2) Relevant and appropriate standards for determining service sizes of foods for purposes of enabling consumers to make comparisons of fat content contained in similar or like products.

SECTION 5. *Labeling.* — The Department of Health shall impose an additional labeling requirement for food which specifically shows:

(1) saturated fat content; and

(2) cholesterol content.

SECTION 6. *Prohibited Acts on Labeling.* — It shall be unlawful for any person, either as principal or agent, engaged in the labeling or packaging of any food consumer product, to display or distribute or to cause to be displayed or distributed in commerce, any food consumer product whose label does not conform to the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Penalties.* — Any person who shall violate the provisions of this Act shall be subject to a fine of not less than One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) but not more than Twenty Thousand Pesos (P20,000.00) or imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than four (4) years or both, at the discretion of the court.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision, or part hereof, is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* — Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity Clause.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.