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Legislation Text

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' Chicago City Council Co-Sponsor Form

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Committee on Health and Environmental Protection
September 6, 2017 City Council Meeting

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Kindergarten-aged Chicago children have been found to be overweight at a prevalence rate of 36.5%, more than twice the national average, and children in predominantly African-American Chicago communities have been found to be disproportionately overweight at 3 to 4 times the national average at rates as high as 55.2%, 56.4%, and 46.4%; and

WHEREAS, children in predominantly Latinx communities are also suffering disproportionately from childhood obesity at rates as high as 42.3% and 39.7% [ip][iii]; and

WHEREAS, analysis of Chicago Public Schools data from students in Kindergarten, 6th, and 9th grades combined show that schools with the highest obesity rates are located in predominantly racial and ethnic minority Chicago neighborhoods (e.g., Hermosa, South Lawndale, Lower West Side, Fuller Park)[iv]

WHEREAS, obese children are at greater risk for numerous adverse health consequences, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, certain cancers, asthma, low self-esteem, depression, and other debilitating diseases(v); and

WHEREAS, obesity-related health conditions have serious economic costs. The medical burden of obesity in the United States is about \$147 billion annually, or almost 10 percent of all medical spending. Roughly one-half of these costs are paid through Medicare and Medicaid, which means that taxpayers foot much of the bill. Medicare and Medicaid spending would be reduced by 8.5 percent and 11.8 percent, respectively, in the absence of obesity-related spendingfyi]; and

WHEREAS, the federal government is actively rolling back public safeguards that promote healthy nutrition, provide consumers with informed choice in their food, and serve to reduce the burden and cost of diet-related disease; including delaying menu-labeling requirements in chain restaurants and other covered retail food establishments that could have prevented up to 41,000 cases of childhood obesity and save over \$4.6 billion in healthcare costs over ten years(vii); and

WHEREAS, Chicago has invested considerable resources to combat childhood obesity by enacting a school wellness policy in Chicago Public Schools that supports nutritious school meals, maintaining daily Physical Education in schools, and advocating for bike and pedestrian friendly streets; and

WHEREAS, despite the progress Chicago has made, marketing, in the form of meals packaged as kids meals, often combined with toys or associated with a promotional theme or movie character remains one area not addressed in Chicago that has been shown to affect children's preference for food; and

WHEREAS, restaurants across the country spend over \$580 million year marketing food and beverages to children, with children's meals being a form of this food marketing[viii];

WHEREAS, families in Chicago often have limited time to obtain and prepare healthy food, making dining out

an appealing and often necessary option. Nationwide, American children eat 19 percent of their calories at fast food and other restaurants.[ix] Children eat almost twice as many calories when they eat a meal at a restaurant as they do when they eat at home.[x] A 2013 study, which examined the nutritional quality of kids' meals sold at 18 of the most profitable fast food restaurant chains in the U.S., found that only 3 percent of the 3,494 meal combinations assessed met the expert nutrition standards for children's mealsbc|j;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and members of the Chicago City Council, agree to explore appropriate policy opportunities to ensure that meals specifically marketed to children meet U.S. Dietary Guidelines; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a hearing be called by the Committee on Health and Environmental Protection with members of the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children of the Lurie Children's Hospital, the Chicago Department of Public Health and any other appropriate experts or departments to propose and consider policy solutions to these issues for the protection, health and advancement of the children of Chicago and their futures.