

OPINION

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Free to Make our Own Choices

Leave out the menu calories

BY JAMES TERRY

Ever ordered a Big Mac, large fries, and a milkshake while looking for a low-cal meal? How about a Bloomin' Onion, Melbourne steak, and 22-ounce beer at Outback while shaping up for the summer swimsuit season?

Sound ridiculous? That's because it is. Most of us order meals like that when we're indulging. Not when we're trying to lose weight. Some Oregon lawmakers, however, don't want us making these choices.

A proposed bill would force chain restaurants to print calorie counts on their menus. This effort would impose massive costs on restaurants and likely result in the disappearance of scores of jobs. And it isn't even likely to change Oregonians' eating habits, but it would take

away some of the joy associated with a trip to the drive-thru.

Proponents of the legislation, which is currently working its way through the Oregon House of Representatives, claim it would lower the health costs associated with obesity. This sounds plausible, but such efforts haven't worked in the past.

In 1992, for example, the federal government mandated that all kinds of nutritional information be posted on packaged food. Nowadays, we rarely buy anything -- whether it's salad dressing or cereal -- without first flipping over the packaging to scope out the "Nutrition Facts."

Unfortunately, knowing the ingredients of our favorite foods hasn't made us thinner. In fact, Oregon's obesity rate has doubled since 1992. More than one in four state citizens are now obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention.

If we aren't willing to count calories when buying groceries, then we sure won't count them when we're ordering at Burger King.

A peer-reviewed study published last year confirms this. Researchers at the University of Minnesota presented survey participants with one of four menus, each of which displayed varying amounts of nutritional information. The menu conditions produced "no significant differences" in consumption.

So, what effect will these labels have? For one, they'll turn fast food restaurants into theaters of public shaming. Diners will no longer be able to enjoy comfort food without fellow patrons knowing exactly how many calories they're consuming.

Do you really want your co-worker -- or even worse, your lunch date -- remembering you for your 4,000-calorie meal?

If you don't think this is a problem, just look at what happened at Harvard University. Cafeterias there used to display nutritional information. But not anymore. It turns out that even our nation's brightest young minds couldn't handle the emotional pressure of fully disclosing their caloric intake. I don't blame them.

Even if menu labels could guilt us into eating healthier, obtaining accurate information for restaurant food is nearly impossible. Most restaurant dishes are made-to-order. So the calorie count, as well as the amount of fat, carbohydrates, and sodium, is different for each patron.

Take mayonnaise. Each serving contains 10 grams of fat and nearly 100 calories. Slap it on each side of a hamburger bun and you're looking at an additional 200 calories. Throw some ketchup and mustard on there and you're consuming nearly

300 calories in condiments alone.

In other words, any government-mandated calorie count is really just an educated guess.

Of course, coming up with those educated guesses wouldn't be cheap. Restaurants would be forced to pay for expensive nutritional analyses of all the items on their menus. Then they'd have to print and distribute new menus. So Oregon's restaurants would be looking at tens of thousands of dollars in new costs.

These costs would be passed on to consumers. Rising prices would lead to falling sales, and eventually restaurants would be forced to pare their workforces. Oregon's restaurants currently employ about 120,000 state residents. Any bill that puts these jobs at risk in the middle of a recession should be rejected outright.

The bill also sets a dangerous precedent. If what we eat

is the government's business, what will politicians do once menu-labeling fails to make us slimmer? Will milk shakes and cheese fries become an adults-only luxury, sold in discreet paper bags in seedy dives?

Advocates of the bill claim that menu-labeling is popular among state residents. But if that were the case, legislative action wouldn't be necessary -- a smart restaurateur would include nutrition information on his menu to get a leg up on his competitors.

No one denies that the growing prevalence of obesity is a serious problem. But mandating calorie counts on menus is not an effective way of shrinking our bulging waistlines. American consumers should be free to make their own choices -- good or bad.

James Terry is chief public advocate of the Consumers Rights League.

The First 100 Days – Then and Now

Valid comparisons to FDR

BY DAVID B. WOOLNER

After 100 days in office, the comparisons between President Obama and Franklin D. Roosevelt seem as valid as ever.

Both leaders have had to cope with an unprecedented global financial crisis, a deteriorating economy, high unemployment, and an electorate steeped in fear and apprehension about the future.

Both men have also had to contend with a worldwide security crisis; inspired in FDR's case by the pernicious ideology of fascism, and in President Obama's by the rise of a deadly form of international terrorism driven by religious extremists.

Both men have also had to share the blessing—or burden—of high expectations, not

only among the American public, but among people the world over, where their assumption of office has been widely heralded as the beginning of a new day.

But in spite of these and other similarities, there are some striking differences between their first 100 days that may provide the current President and his colleagues in Congress with some food for thought.

One clear distinction is the reaction of the Republican Congressional leadership to the President's initial legislative agenda. In FDR's day, many Republicans not only responded positively to the President's call for bi-partisanship, they also lent their support to some of the most significant measures to come out

of the 100 days, including the Federal Emergency Relief Act and the establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority or TVA—our nation's first electric public utility.

In short, this "unprecedented national emergency"

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met with unprecedented national cooperation, among democrats and republicans, and among the executive and legislative branches of government.

A second clear distinction involves America's standing overseas. Although FDR did not attend, he sent a high level delegation (led by his Secretary

of State, Cordell Hull) to Great Britain in June 1933 to attend the long anticipated "London Monetary and Economic Conference."

Attended by 66 nations, and convened to bring about an international response to the glo-

agreement had been secured—greatly disappointed the British, French and other delegations. As a result, his international reputation suffered for a time and there were fears—which subsequently proved unfounded—that FDR was an economic nationalist.

By contrast, President Obama's performance at the recent G-20 meeting in London has been a 10-strike. The President may not have gotten all he wanted in London, but his willingness to listen to and work with the leaders of the world's leading industrialized nations, along with his ensuing visits to France and Turkey, have restored the international community's faith in American leadership and significantly enhanced the confidence of people the world over that together we will get through

this crisis.

This last point brings us back to the most significant similarity between the two men—their ability to inspire hope in moments of despair and their willingness to act.

FDR, like President Obama, never lost faith in the ability of the American people to restore the nation to prosperity. But he understood that government, which he wisely called "ourselves and not an alien power over us," had a vital role to play in this process.

By restoring the people's faith in government, then, FDR in essence restored their faith in themselves. President Obama and our leadership in Congress would be wise to do the same.

David B. Woolner is senior vice president of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute.

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If you or a loved one have sustained serious injury or death you may have a cause of action:

- 1). **Raptiva** - used to treat Psoriasis but can cause rare brain infection known as PML (Progressive Multifocal Leukoencephalopathy), various malignancies, Viral Meningitis, Invasive Fungal Disease, Anemia and Bacterial Sepsis
- 2). **Gadolinium** - injected into bloodstream to enhance MRI/MRA screenings but can cause NSF(Nephrogenic Systemic Fibrosis) which can lead to kidney or renal failure. Symptoms may include swelling, hardening and tightening of the skin, reddened or darkened patches of skin, burning and itching of skin, yellow raised spots on the whites of eyes and stiffening of joints.
- 3). **Reglan** - used to treat heart burn and gastroesophagel or acid reflux but can cause temporary/permanent involuntary movement (tardive dyskinesia) which can effect the face, and other parts of the body. It has also been known to cause Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome which symptoms include high fever, sweating, unstable blood pressure, stupor, muscular rigidity and autonomic dysfunction.
- 4). **Propylthiouracil** - used to treat Grave's (thyroid) disease in children but can cause severe liver damage or death.
- 5). **Permax** - used to manage tremors and slowness of movement associated with Parkinson's Disease or Restless Leg Syndrome. Can cause damage to the mitral, aortic and tricuspid heart valves, which includes leakage of these valves.

Medical Devices:

- 6). **Mentor OB Tape** - vaginal mesh sling used to treat bladder incontinence in women but can cause severe infection, extreme vaginal pain, vaginal extrusion and urinary tract erosion.
- 7). **Duragesic Pain Patch** - used to treat pain but patch may leak and cause inadequate treatment or a fatal fentanyl/morphine overdose

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High Schoolers Left Behind

Time to teach 'outside the box'

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Signed amid controversy in 2001, the No Child Left Behind

law shook up the nation's public education system. Schools were now held accountable for student achievement; if students continually failed to meet minimum test scores, schools were placed on probation. Classroom instruction methods were changed, too, with in-



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creased focus placed on 'teaching to the test', taking away from more in-depth instruction.

Several years have now gone by, giving analysts enough time to assess how the law, if at all, impacts student performance.

The continued gap between minority and white high school students must not be ignored.

According to the Civil Rights Project, NCLB isn't working. At least not for minority high school students.

The study looked test scores for three groups of students.

From 1999 to 2004, elementary school younger black students made big gains in their standardized test scores. In 1999, the black-white gap in math scores for nine year old students was 28 points. Black students in that

17 year olds, however, only increased their score 2 points.

While the improvements made by younger students should be celebrated, the continued gap between minority and white high school students must not be ignored. Graduation rates in black and Latino communities still lag behind those of whites and, in urban areas, the dropout rates for students of color are astoundingly high.

More important than meeting the standards of NCLB should be preparing these high schools students for life outside of the classroom. Individuals with a high school diploma will earn more money over their life time than someone without one and are less likely to live in poverty. The job market is increasingly competitive; high school dropouts have few options for employment.

Instead of solely focusing on test scores, the nation's education system needs to diversify the way it helps students learn. Programs that teach "outside of the box" must be developed.

Part of our job as a nation is to ensure all of our children receive the best possible education we can provide. Since NCLB sets the standard by which all schools are measured, we must work to ensure it takes into account the learning gap between minority and white high school and creates a plan for addressing it.

Judge Greg Mathis is vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.



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A: Constant colds and influenza indicate that the immune system (and the body in general) is highly stressed. Did you know that recently leading scientists have discovered that the entire immune system is an out-growth of the nervous system? If your nervous system is stressed and irritated, the immune system can-

not work properly either. People who have regular Chiropractic checkups report that they get fewer colds and influenza. They keep the stress off their nervous systems. Keeping irritation off the nervous system also helps you avoid morning backache and head-aches and allows you to cope with stress better. And

you'd be amazed at the energy you have with preventive Chiropractic checkups. If you'd like to trade in your colds for a bounce in your step, call us for an appointment today. It could be the healthiest call you have ever made. Isn't time you stepped up to Chiropractic?

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