Exercising the Right to Know!

In response to the obesity epidemic, several states and cities are working toward or have passed legislation to help consumers make wiser fast food choices.

- January 2008 – **New York City** revised legislation requiring food establishments with 15 or more locations nationally to list calories for standard menu items on menu boards, menus or food item display tags.
- September 2008 – **California** was the first state in the nation to have its restaurant chains with 20 or more locations statewide post calorie information on menus and indoor menu boards for consumers. This will take effect in January 2011.
- November 2008 – **Philadelphia** passed the strictest menu labeling regulation in the country, requiring saturated and trans fat count, sodium, carbohydrate and caloric information to be available on printed menus. This will take effect in January 2010.

Success of Menu Labeling in New York City

- Short term:
  - An overwhelming 89 percent of the public supported the menu labeling initiative. Almost 90 percent of individuals were surprised by the calorie counts, and claimed they were higher than expected.
  - Many customers are choosing lower calorie meals and making more informed decisions.
  - Restaurants are shaving off calories and offering new, lower-calorie options.
- Long-term:
  - The rates of obesity and obesity related diseases are projected to drop significantly.
    - Ex. New York City Department of Health projected that menu labeling in the City will prevent at least 30,000 new cases of diabetes over the next five years.