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Firstly, while vacationing in Mexico, I have seen this type of labelling on packages in grocery stores. As a nutrition-conscious person, I like this sort of mindfulness when shopping. I think it's a great first step in tackling the obesity epidemic. This type of labelling will cause some controversy, but ignite an vitally important conversation in this country regarding dietary choices.

However, as a County Restaurant Health Inspector, who interacts with people of an array of socioeconomic, education, and cultural backgrounds. Is this new regulation going to have a large education piece? Daily, I cite violations where workers are well aware of the regulations, expectations. Some still do not properly wash hands, monitor refrigerator temperatures, or ensure foods are properly hot held. They have not bought in to the importance of proper sanitation policies, even if they receive a bad score.

I see similarities with this initiative. It has good intentions, but what are you replacing these food choices with? Has labelling requirements definitively decreased obesity rates in Mexico and other countries? The US Government is widely known to subsidize companies like Conagra, Nestle, General Mills, and PepsiCo. How does this change any of the influence these conglomerates have on the complex and convoluted food system? Working in my position, I have gotten a close look at how people view the Government and our systems. I get the opportunity to see the nuanced opinions of everyday people. People are becoming evermore critical and distrustful.

There needs to be more investment fruits, vegetables, easy to cook meals with whole grains, and allocating money for local governments to teach people these skills. A record low number of people know how to cook and have these life skills. Where is the opportunity to learn? When the store shelves are covered in labels that say "high fat" "high calories" "high sodium", that isn't particularly motivating for the average consumer. Where is the incentive for people who don't care; which is many? As a personal example, my mother, a middle class woman with an adequate income, has been trying to lose weight for years. She has tried every diet under the sun, but struggles to keep the weight off. She has worked with several nutritionists. She remains obese.

She's just one example of millions. Yes people have a right to personal choice, but what's the next step after this. Right now, to myself and I am sure others, think this is something that can make people at the FDA feel good about themselves. I can see the benefits of increasing awareness. However, if COVID-19 was a lesson learned, it's that there is an internet full of many different opinions, research, and false information. The people who need this the most don't know how to sort through everything. My concern is that this will lead to more shame than motivation, and what are the long term consequences of this? What about the little girl who lives in a food desert who has body image issues, and has a limited number of options? What about the parents who work all of the time and on a limited income, and they have limited time to prep nutritious options? Sure these packaged food companies will have to put this new step on their packaging, but they will continue to make money. It happens in Mexico! Meanwhile the farmers and average Americans still suffer.