

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

SB 117

2025 Regular Session

Miguez

Proposed law (R.S. 17:192.3) would have prohibited public school boards participating in a federally funded or assisted meal program and nonpublic schools that receive state or federal funding from serving or selling, or allowing a third party food management company to serve or sell, food with certain ultra-processed ingredients on campus during the regular school day. Would have provided that proposed law would not have prevented parents from providing such foods to their children during such time and that proposed law would not have applied to food served or sold in concession stands and vending machines in accordance with existing law.

Proposed law would have provided a list of ingredients prohibited to be in food or beverages served or sold during the regular school day.

Proposed law would have further provided:

- (1) Schools could have begun implementing proposed law prior to the 2027-2028 school year but full compliance would have been mandatory beginning with that school year.
- (2) The state Dept. of Education would have been required to post on its website a form on which a school may certify that it is in compliance with proposed law and a list of schools that have done so.
- (3) Any public school that participates in a federally funded or assisted meal program and any nonpublic school that receives state or federal funds would have been required, to the extent practicable, to purchase food produced in La., subject to an appropriation by the legislature for this purpose.

Proposed law (R.S. 17:3996(B)(4)) would have provided for applicability to charter schools.

Would have become effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Proposed to add R.S. 17:192.3, and 3996(B)(4))

VETO MESSAGE:

"Senate Bill 117 aims to ban ultra-processed food in our schools. I am all for measures to Make Louisiana Healthy Again, especially when it comes to loading our students' plates with nutritious options. That is why I signed Senate Bill 14 into law during the 2025 Regular Session, sponsored by Senator McMath. Senate Bill 117, however, steps on the toes of SB 14-a priority bill for my administration that was passed with broad legislative support after a full-caliber collaborative effort from a wide coalition. SB 14 takes a more measured approach at boosting Louisiana's health without setting off conflicting standards.

While SB 117 shares some ground with SB 14, the latter goes further downrange to improve health. For instance, SB 117 leaves some harmful ingredients in the chamber-like azodicarbonamide, BHA, BHT, acesulfame potassium, and sucralose-still allowed in foods served to our students. Senate Bill 14 bans these outright, putting them out of commission.

Beyond that, SB 14 loads the health initiative with a broader scope. It requires certain physicians, physician assistants, and advanced practice nurses to reload their knowledge with continuing education on nutrition and metabolic health. It also mandates that food manufacturers tag their products if they include any of 44 specified ingredients and requires food establishments to flag the presence of seed oils if they're cooking with them-making sure no one gets caught off guard.

I have been scratching my head over SB 117's presence ever since it was filed on April 3, 2025- weeks after SB 14 was already filed on March 18, 2025. On the House Floor on June 3, 2025, Representative Julie Emerson called out Representative Josh Carlson on how close the bills are. Carlson admitted they were "very similar" and basically the "same bill," which makes SB 117 seem like a misfire.

It is also important to note that Senate Bill 14 's prohibitions on serving certain ingredients to our students do not take effect until the 2028-2029 school year. Senate Bill 117 mandates schools to comply with its provisions in the 2027-2028 school year. We must consider any budgetary plans that schools may have already made for the 2027-2028 school year. Senate Bill 14 gives our schools the necessary time to prepare to implement these changes in consideration of their budgetary planning.

I remain locked in with the "Make America Healthy Again" initiative and urge the Legislature to keep aiming with my administration to find practical, effective, and scalable ways to promote health, wellness, and food quality across our state-especially in our schools.

In short, these two bills fire at some of the same targets, but SB 14 is a well-aimed tool that will Make Louisiana Healthy Again. Senate Bill 117 creates some confusion and inconsistency on the same subject matter.

For these reasons, I have vetoed Senate Bill 117 and return it to the Senate."