

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Health
For HB 1447

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Hearing Date: April 17, 2023 8:00 AM

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I am writing in support of HB 1447, presented by Rep Cortez. Food allergy awareness in most public dining or serving settings is incredibly low, making it very difficult for those with food allergies to even speak to someone regarding service. Providing for signage regarding the risks present in a particular establishment can alleviate this pressure both for those with food allergies and staff. Additionally, requiring training and basic information not only serves consumers with food allergies but helps employees in food establishments understand the risks for cross-contamination, helping food safety standards reach better compliance, and the general health literacy of Texans. Many parents of children with food allergies as well as allergic adults report that the first reaction happened in a public location, rather than at home, and signage and awareness around reactions for everyone involved in the setting can only improve safety and outcomes for Texans experiencing their first allergic reaction as well. In fact, FARE, a leading advocacy group for Americans with food allergies states that, "most fatal food allergy reactions are triggered by food consumed outside the home." FARE also reports that, "severe or fatal reactions can happen at any age, but teenagers and young adults with food allergies are at the highest risk of fatal food-induced anaphylaxis." These are often young Texans, dining away from parents and home and being served by other young Texans - this bill would help all involved prevent a fatal reaction, as the signs and symptoms become common knowledge. One in ten adults has a food allergy, presenting a quality-of-life issue and a barrier to supporting the dining and food industry in Texas. An often-suggested solution is that those with food allergies simply stay home, rather than requiring businesses to address food allergies; asking one-tenth of the Texas population to stay home rather than dine out in Texas would continue to have major impacts for businesses.

Please improve the health literacy of Texans and outcomes for those experiencing food allergies and move this bill forward.