

June 24, 2025

Senator Sasha Renee Perez
Chair, Senate Education Committee
1021 O Street, Room 6740
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **Support for AB 1264** (Jesse Gabriel)— Phasing Out Particularly Harmful Ultra-Processed Foods from California Schools

Dear Chair and members of the Senate Education Committee,

Consumer Reports¹ is pleased to support and co-sponsor AB 1264, which will protect children's health by phasing out "particularly harmful" ultra-processed foods (UPFs) from school meals.

UPFs are not just highly manufactured—they are deliberately engineered to be hyper-palatable. Packed with industrial additives, these products are designed to override the body's natural hunger cues and encourage overconsumption. Unlike whole or minimally processed foods, UPFs offer little nutritional value while contributing to chronic health conditions. A 2024 [review](#) of epidemiological meta-analyses found that increased consumption of UPFs was associated with higher risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, common mental disorders, and all cause mortality.

Besides defining UPFs, AB 1264 also directs the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) to define "particularly harmful UPFs", e.g., those that pose the greatest health risk to school aged children, by enlisting California's state scientists to identify which additives and combinations of additives pose the greatest risk to their health, by considering a variety of factors which take account of both the peer-reviewed scientific literature as well as actions (such as bans, restrictions or warning labels) taken in other local, state, federal or international jurisdictions due to concerns about adverse health effects. We strongly agree with the list of factors to consider when deciding what constitutes a "particularly harmful UPF", and that this list of "particularly harmful UPFs" will be updated every other year to accommodate any relevant advances in scientific knowledge.

¹ Founded in 1936, [Consumer Reports](#) (CR) is an independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan organization that works with consumers to create a fair and just marketplace. Known for its rigorous testing and ratings of products, CR advocates for laws and company practices that put consumers first. CR is dedicated to amplifying the voices of consumers to promote safety, digital rights, financial fairness, and sustainability. The organization surveys millions of Americans every year, reports extensively on the challenges and opportunities for today's consumers, and provides ad-free content and tools to 6 million members across the U.S.

California has already set the gold standard for food safety and school nutrition when the legislature enacted AB 418 --which banned the use of the toxic compounds brominated vegetable oil, potassium bromate, propyl paraben and Red dye 3 in food--and AB 2316 --which banned the use of 6 toxic synthetic dyes Blue 1, Blue 2, Green 2, Red 40, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6 in school foods. AB 1264 will build on that foundation, providing another opportunity to make California's children's health our top priority.

For all these reasons, Consumer Reports strongly supports AB 1264 and urges you to vote "aye".

Sincerely,

Brian Ronholm
Director, Food Policy

Dr. Michael Hansen, Ph.D.
Senior Scientist