



Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

Press Advisory

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For Immediate Release

April 2, 2009

"SENATOR SHAPLEIGH, REPRESENTATIVE CAROL ALVARADO TO HOST PRESS CONFERENCE ON LEGISLATION TO BAN TRANS FAT IN TEXAS RESTAURANTS"

"Across Texas, a silent epidemic of obesity is shortening lives, raising health costs and putting more and more Texans at risk. With SB 204, we can make sure more Texans live strong—and healthy lives. In Austin, the support of the Texas Restaurant Association will help pass this key bill."

AUSTIN - On Monday, April 6, 2009 at 11 a.m. in the Lt. Governor's Press Room in Austin, Senator Eliot Shapleigh (D-El Paso) and Representative Carol Alvarado (D-Houston) will host a **press conference supporting legislation they filed to eliminate trans fat from the menus of Texas restaurants.**

This legislative session, Senator Shapleigh filed [SB 204](#) and Representative Alvarado filed [HB 1523](#), which amend the Health and Safety Code to prohibit Texas restaurants from packaging, storing or using trans fat to prepare or serve food.

"Across Texas, a silent epidemic of obesity is shortening lives, raising health costs and putting more and more Texans at risk. With SB 204, we can make sure more Texans live strong—and healthy lives. In Austin, the support of the Texas Restaurant Association will help pass this key bill," Senator Shapleigh said.

"Texans cannot afford to suffer from the lingering health effects of heart disease, diabetes, and the other ailments caused by bad cholesterol intake. Many restaurants in the country, including a number of prominent chains already take responsibility for the foods they serve by eliminating trans fat from their menu. I applaud these good corporate citizens and look forward to the day when all of Texas is trans-fat free," Rep. Alvarado said.

Most of the trans fat Americans consume is artificial trans fat that comes from oil that has undergone partial hydrogenation, a process in which hydrogen is added to an oil to make it more solid. This process is used in most margarine or shortening.

- More -

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[SB 204](#) and [HB 1523](#) propose a proactive ban on artificial trans fats in all Texas restaurants and would require that all prepared and served food items contain less than 0.5 grams for trans fat per serving.

Passage of these bills would go a long way in combating rising obesity rates across Texas. According to the Texas Department of State Health Services, [nearly 66 percent of adults](#) in the state and 32 percent of high school students were overweight or obese in 2007. According to a Paso Del Norte Health Foundation report, more than 37 percent of El Pasoans were overweight in 2006, and another 27.2 percent were obese.

High obesity rates translate into enormous health costs from illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and high blood pressure. [The Texas Department of Health has reported](#) that economic costs related to obesity could reach as much as \$39 billion by 2040.

Since filing [SB 204](#), Senator Shapleigh has worked closely with the Texas Restaurant Association (TRA) to make sure the bill improves Texans' health without putting undue burden on Texas restaurants.

Also attending the press conference will be Representative Eddie Lucio III, Representative Veronica Gonzalez and Representative John Zerwas, along with representatives from the Texas Restaurant Association, the American Heart Association and the American Diabetes Association.

To combat childhood obesity, this session, Senator Shapleigh also filed [SB 352](#), which prohibits school districts from providing meals to students that contains trans fat or that was prepared using another food that contains trans fat.

[SB 204](#) has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. [SB 352](#) has been referred to the Senate Committee on Education. [HB 1523](#) has been referred to the House Committee on Public Health.

What: Senator Eliot Shapleigh, Representative Carol Alvarado to host press conference supporting legislation to eliminate trans fat from Texas restaurants.

When: Monday, April 6, 2009 at 11 a.m.

Where: Lt. Governor's Press Room, Capitol Building , 2E.9

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