

9-Year-Old's Vision Becomes California Law

SB 68 – The ADDE Bill (Allergen Disclosure for Dining Experiences) First in Nation

SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES, October 14, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- What began with a bite of dumplings has become a landmark state law. California's SB 68 — The ADDE Bill (Allergen Disclosure for Dining Experiences) — was inspired by 9-year-old Addie Lao, who lives with life-threatening allergies to dairy, tree nuts, peanuts, and sesame, and her mom, pediatric nurse practitioner Robyn Huey Lao.

Last year, Addie was finally able to enjoy a full meal at an Asian restaurant, thanks to a menu that clearly labeled food allergens — a rare and emotional moment, since sesame oil is often a hidden ingredient in dumplings. Watching her daughter eat safely brought Robyn to tears. That experience became their mission: allergen labeling should be the standard, not the exception.



9-Year-Old allergy advocate Addie Lao and her mother, Robyn Lao

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9-Year-Old Addie Lao

“The ADDE Bill is so important so adults and kids like me can eat safely,” said Addie Lao. “I learned that even though I’m just a kid, I can make a big difference. I want to thank everyone who helped make restaurants safer for families like mine.”

Addie asked her mom to help bring the idea to the California State Capitol. Together, they partnered with Senator Caroline Menjivar, who authored and introduced SB 68. Co-sponsored by Addie and Robyn Lao, and the

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), the bill has now been signed into law by

Governor Gavin Newsom.

"SB 68 is a crucial first step toward a culture of food allergy safety that will save lives and empower families like ours to dine out," said Robyn Huey Lao. "This law sets a new national precedent. We're incredibly proud of how far this has come and hopeful that allergen labeling will soon become standard everywhere."

SB 68 makes California the first state in the nation to require restaurants with 20 or more locations to clearly label the nine major food allergens on their menus. This aligns California with international food safety standards already established across 27 EU countries and the UK — and provides life-saving transparency to millions of diners.

"When Addie presented the idea to me, I couldn't believe that I, a person who has been hospitalized multiple times after unintentionally eating food I am allergic to at restaurants, had not thought to author this bill already," said CA State Senator Caroline Menjivar. "Now, California is the first state in the nation to require lifesaving allergen disclosures on menus!"

Addie personally testified at the Capitol alongside her third-grade classmates and local allergy-affected families, urging lawmakers to take action. The bill received overwhelming bipartisan support and sparked a grassroots movement, backed by nearly 900 individuals — including 500 medical professionals — and 80 professional organizations, including the California Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics-CA, and the American Nurses Association-California.

"Today marks a historic victory for the millions of Californians living with food allergies," said Kenneth Mendez, president and CEO of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. "While this first step applies to chain restaurants with 20 or more locations, it sets a powerful precedent that will encourage broader adoption across the industry and inspire other states to follow California's lead. This is what progress looks like when advocacy, courage, and common sense come together."

The need is urgent. Emergency visits for food-induced anaphylaxis have more than tripled over the past decade. In California alone, over 4 million residents — 1 in 10 — live with food allergies. SB 68 will help reveal hidden allergens for restaurant staff and diners, allowing for informed choices and safer dining. Examples include tree nuts in vegan cheese, butter used in cooking, or wheat in sauces — common but often invisible on menus.

Research supports this approach: a 2020 study in *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice* found that when allergens were clearly labeled and staff were informed, only 13.7% of reactions occurred, compared to 53.9% when communication was verbal only.

This law is more than just a policy victory — it's a lifeline for families across the state and visitors who want to dine confidently in California.

Addie Tells All is a California-based initiative founded by Addie Lao and her mother, Robyn Huey Lao. Their mission is to raise awareness, educate, and advocate for the food allergy community.

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