

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2903



Introduced by Rep. Precious Hipolito Castelo

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Gluten is a type of protein found in grains including wheat, barley, spelt, and rye.¹ It is an ingredient of the most common foods and condiments such as French fries, processed cheese, pasta, bread, hotdogs, cereals, ice cream, ketchup, mayonnaise, and soy sauce, among others.

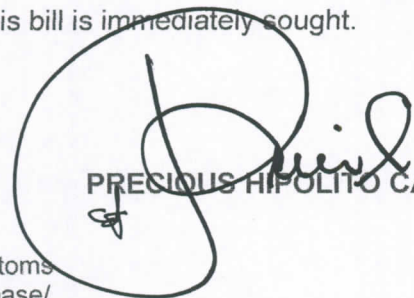
For most people, gluten poses no risk. Thus, they can enjoy a hearty breakfast of their favorite cereals and bread with no problems. However, for people diagnosed with *Celiac Disease*, eating these glutenous food products is a health risk.

Celiac Disease is a serious autoimmune disease that occurs in genetically predisposed people where the ingestion of gluten leads to damage in the small intestines.² While it seems to be unheard of in the Philippines, it is estimated to affect 1 in 100 people worldwide.³ For those who are affected with it, consumption of gluten can lead to malnourishment, as well as loss of bone density, miscarriages, infertility, and even cancer.⁴

Currently, there are no drugs that treat *Celiac Disease*.⁵ The only way for those diagnosed with it to go on with their lives is a lifetime adherence to a strict gluten-free diet. However, it is not an easy task to determine the component ingredients of every single food product.

As such, this bill seeks to mandate the manufacturers of food products to indicate conspicuously in the nutritional labels of their goods whether their products have gluten or not. Further, owners of restaurants and food establishments shall also extend their assistance and accommodate those diagnosed with *Celiac Disease* when they inquire what food products they can consume off their menus.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is immediately sought.


PRECIOUS HIPOLITO CASTELO

¹ <https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/celiac-disease-symptoms>

² <https://celiac.org/about-celiac-disease/what-is-celiac-disease/>

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ <https://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/celiac-disease/celiac-disease#2>

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HOUSE BILL NO. _____

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AN ACT

REQUIRING THE DISCLOSURE OF THE PRESENCE OR ABSENCE OF GLUTEN IN FOOD PRODUCTS FOR THE PROTECTION OF THOSE DIAGNOSED WITH CELIAC DISEASE

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Gluten Disclosure in Food Products Act.”

SEC. 2. *Objective.* – This Act aims to protect those diagnosed with Celiac Disease who are at risk of having a serious allergic reaction to gluten consumption.

SEC. 3. *Disclosure of Gluten Component in all Food Products.* – All manufacturers of food products are mandated to specifically declare the presence of gluten in their products by listing therein the word “gluten” in their nutritional labels. In case a food product is gluten-free, the manufacturer should conspicuously label that such product is gluten-free.

SEC. 4. *Assistance to those Diagnosed with Celiac Disease by Owners of Restaurants and Food Establishments.* – Owners of restaurants and food establishments, as well as their employees, shall endeavor to assist and accommodate all those who are diagnosed with Celiac Disease, when they inquire what products in their menus are gluten-free.

SEC. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act, the relevant government agencies shall formulate and promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or section of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions and sections not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, or issuances, or any part thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,