

Most obese US state bans food portion restrictions

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The most obese state in the U.S. now says local governments can't restrict the sizes of food or drink portions.

The new Mississippi law is seen by some as a reaction to the recent New York City proposal to ban the sale of super-sized [sugary drinks](#). A judge blocked that ban last week after protests by the soda industry and others who said the government shouldn't interfere in personal choices.

The Mississippi law says local governments can't require restaurants to list [calorie counts](#) on menus. It was pushed by the state restaurant association and chicken growers, among others.

New York City Mayor [Michael Bloomberg](#) has called the law "ridiculous."

Federal rankings show nearly 35 percent of Mississippi adults were very fat in 2011, the worst rate in the nation. Mississippi is also the poorest state in the country, and a significant amount of its Deep South cuisine is also deep-fried.

[Republican Gov.](#) Phil Bryant signed the food portion bill into law Monday.

"It is simply not the role of government to micro-regulate citizens' dietary decisions," Bryant said in a statement. "The responsibility for one's personal health depends on individual choices about a proper diet

and appropriate exercise."

Mark Leggett, president of the Mississippi Poultry Association, said consumers shouldn't face a patchwork of local regulations for food labeling or portion sizes.

Bryant said the new law won't prevent "laudable efforts by local schools to ensure that food offered in schools is healthy and nutritious."

The governor cited research that showed [obesity rates](#) among young school students in Mississippi declined by 13.3 percent between 2005 and 2011, as schools banned soft drinks and moved away from deep-frying chicken and other foods.

[Michelle Obama](#) talked about the same statistics Feb. 27 when she went to a Mississippi school to promote her "Let's Move" campaign to end [childhood obesity](#).

Bryant has said he was overweight as a child. He has been a runner for years.

"Leading a healthy lifestyle is important to me, and it is a personal priority of mine to educate Mississippians on the importance of making good health decisions," Bryant said.

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