

California State Senate advances legislation to ban use of dangerous food additives

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Yesterday, the California State Senate Health Committee advanced first-of-its-kind legislation to prohibit the use of five dangerous and toxic chemicals in processed foods and drinks sold in California. Authored by Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D-Encino),

Assembly Bill (AB) 418 would prohibit the manufacture, sale, or distribution of any food product in California containing Red Dye No. 3, Titanium Dioxide, Potassium Bromate, Brominated Vegetable Oil, or Propyl Paraben. The use of these chemicals has already been terminated in the European Union (EU) and many other jurisdictions due to scientific research linking them to significant health harms, including cancer, reproductive issues, and behavioral and developmental issues in children.

"Today's strong vote is a major step forward in our effort to protect children and families in California from dangerous and toxic chemicals in our food supply," said Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel. "It's unacceptable that the U.S. is so far behind the rest of the world when it comes to banning these dangerous additives. We don't love our children any less than they do in Europe and it's not too much to ask food and beverage manufacturers to switch to the safer alternative ingredients that they already use in so many other nations around the globe."

“Things like this aren’t partisan. They’re common sense.” said Former Governor and sports and fitness icon Arnold Schwarzenegger, who recently endorsed AB 418 in his daily [Pump Club Newsletter](#). “I’m a small government guy. But I’ve also seen that sometimes, in a world where every big industry has an army of lobbyists, and our kids have no one fighting for them, government has to step in.”

Numerous scientific studies have linked these chemicals to significant health harms, including [increased risk of cancer](#), [behavioral issues in children](#), [harm to the reproductive system](#), and [damage to the immune system](#). As a result, the EU and many other nations, including the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, China, and Japan, already have prohibited their use in food, and many major brands and manufacturers—including Coke, Pepsi, Gatorade, Dunkin Donuts, Papa John’s Pizza, and Panera—have voluntarily stopped using these additives in their products.

AB 418 will not remove any products from the shelves, nor will it ban any product that California consumers enjoy. Products like Skittles continue to be sold in stores across Europe using safe alternatives.

AB 418 is needed because chemical companies in the U.S. have been able to exploit a major loophole and avoid meaningful independent review by the FDA of numerous food additives, thereby placing the U.S. far behind many other nations when it comes to food safety. If signed into law, AB 418 would require companies to make modifications to the recipes for products sold in California and likely prompt a nationwide transition to safer alternatives, ensuring we don’t one day see a total recall of products we all love and enjoy.

AB 418 now moves to the Senate Committee on Environmental Quality, where it is expected to be heard in the following weeks.