

CRISTINA GARCIA

ASSEMBLY MEMBER

58TH DISTRICT

CAPITOL OFFICE
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0058
PHONE: (916) 319-2058

E-MAIL: ASSEMBLYMEMBER.GARCIA@ASSEMBLY.CA.GOV



DISTRICT OFFICE
8255 FIRESTONE BLVD SUITE 203
DOWNEY, CA 90241
PHONE: (562) 861-5803
WEBSITE: WWW.ASSEMBLY.CA.GOV/GARCIA

Press Release

January 27, 2022

Contact: Ashley Labar
Office: (916) 319-2058
Cell: (925) 719-1298



Proposed law to prohibit weight loss supplements & over-the-counter (OTC) diet pills from being sold to minors passes out of the Assembly

(Sacramento)–Today, AB 1341 authored by Assemblymembers Cristina Garcia (D-Bell Gardens) and Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D-Winters) and coauthored by Assemblymember Wendy Carrillo (D-Los Angeles), passed the Assembly Floor on a vote of 55-13, and is now off to the Senate. AB 1341 will prohibit any retail establishment from selling, transferring, or furnishing dietary supplements for weight loss or over the counter (OTC) diet pills to anyone under 18 years of age.

Chair of the Legislative Women's Caucus Assemblywoman Cristina Garcia said of her legislation, "We need to do more to protect our youth from the harmful effects that weight loss supplements and over-the-counter diet pills have on our youth. With easy access, our youth are subject to eating disorders and many other health implications. We need to stand up to an industry that puts profit over people."

"Body dissatisfaction is nothing new in our society. But, young people are now faced with pressure to have an "ideal" body based on what they see on social media, leading to eating disorders and mental health challenges. Access to dietary supplements has increased while supervision and regulations have decreased. AB 1341 by Assemblymember Cristina Garcia will guarantee these supplements are only available to our children under the sensitive supervision they need to be healthy," said Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry.

Health officials are growing increasingly alarmed by the use of diet pills and weight-loss supplements and want to limit their access especially in the face of the COVID 19 pandemic, “As a pediatrician specializing in adolescent eating disorders, I have cared for countless youth in California who have used weight loss supplements and diet pills, developed eating disorders, become critically ill, and required hospitalization. Hospitalizations for eating disorders have doubled since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said University of California San Francisco Assistant Professor, Dr. Jason Nagata.

Diet pills and weight loss supplements have limited regulatory oversight and have raised alarms among youth health advocates “Some of these dietary supplements are laced with banned pharmaceuticals, steroids, and other toxic ingredients. Dangerous stimulants are also often found in widely available supplements for weight loss. That’s just bad for our children and they need to be protected from exploitation,” said body image advocate Kelsey Wu, the founder of For Her.

Research indicates that the use of dietary weight-loss supplements across race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status hurts many communities that already shoulder other health burdens. Findings include the following:

- Women are two times more likely to use weight loss supplements and OTC diet pills than men¹
- African American and Latinx adults are at a higher risk of using weight loss supplements than white adults¹
- People in households with annual income less than \$40,000 are more likely to use dietary supplements for weight loss than those with higher incomes¹
- Latinx teens are 40% more likely to use OTC diet pills than white teens²

Additional Quotes:

Quote from Asm. Carrillo – Co Author – AD 51, City of Los Angeles, unincorporated East Los Angeles:

“Diet pills and other weight loss products are not meant for children and should not be sold over the counter. Diet pills wreak havoc on a child’s physical development and mental health. Some have been recalled because their use by teens in viral social media challenges have led to horrible outcomes. Yet, their use has doubled among adolescents. That’s why we need AB 1341 now,” said Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo. “Experts have consistently warned of the threats ingredients like phentermine, orlistat and sibutramine pose. Like their predecessors – regulated in the 1980s – these products are harmful and the risks are too high for them to be so easily available,” she added.

Founder of For Her, Kelsey Wu:

“What’s so scary right now is that the groups who are supposed to be protecting us teenagers from these dangerous products are doing the exact opposite. Take the Council for Responsible Nutrition as an example. Their name indicates that they are a group that values safe and responsible nutrition, however, they want to be able to sell these dangerous products to minors in California and are opposed to AB 1341.

¹ Pillitteri JL, Shiffman S, Rohay JM, Harkins AM, Burton SL, Wadden TA. Use of dietary supplements for weight loss in the United States: Results of a national survey. *Obesity (Silver Spring)*. 2008;16(4):790-796. doi:10.1038/oby.2007.136

² Vitagliano J, Beccia A, Mattei J, Cory H, Austin SB. Disproportionate risk of over-the-counter diet pill use among Latinx youth: Results of a national study (In preparation).

Speaking on behalf of the children of California, all we are asking is for our leaders of the state to step up and act to protect the millions of youth in California from these dangerous products.”

University of California San Francisco Assistant Professor, Dr. Jason Nagata:

“Youth who use over-the-counter diet pills are six times more likely to be diagnosed with an eating disorder compared to nonusers. Diet pills, weight loss supplements, and eating disorders affect youth of all races, genders, sexual orientations, sizes, and socio-economic backgrounds.”

Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders, Director, Dr. Bryn Austin:

“The scientific research on the dangers of using weight-loss supplements is as incontrovertible as it is chilling: These products have been found again and again to contain a toxic brew of undisclosed ingredients linked to heart palpitations, cardiac arrest, stroke, and even liver damage so extensive as to require organ transplant or resulting in death. Knowing what we know today about these products, how can we continue to let the manufacturers and retailers who profit from them play Russian roulette with the children of California?”

The 58th Assembly District includes the cities of Montebello, Pico Rivera, Commerce, Bell Gardens, Downey, Norwalk, Bellflower, Cerritos, and Artesia.

###