

STRIPED

A PUBLIC HEALTH
INCUBATOR

Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders

August 2026

Re: Assembly Bill 2030 (Asm. J. Lowenthal) Dietary supplements for weight loss and over-the counter diet pills

Dear Honorable Lawmakers of the California State Senate:

We, the undersigned, respectfully urge your support of **AB2030, “Dietary supplements for weight loss and over-the-counter diet pills” in the upcoming Senate floor vote this month.** Authored by Assemblymember Josh Lowenthal, this important legislation would protect children across California by prohibiting the sale of weight-loss and muscle-building dietary supplements and over-the-counter (OTC) diet pills in retail stores or online to any person under 18 years of age.

While these products are sold with false promises to promote healthy weight loss or muscle building, this deceptive claim could not be further from the truth. Due to dangerously lax federal regulation,¹ these products are not required to demonstrate safety or efficacy before entering the market, leaving consumers at unacceptably high risk. *Case in point:* On July 30, 2026, the owner of the American company Paradigm Peptides was **sentenced to 6 years in federal prison** after selling muscle-building supplements and other products **laced with illegal steroids to tens of thousands of consumers.**^{2,3} Consumers of these dangerous supplements in states across the country reported severe physical and mental health effects, including **cardiac problems, disruptions to natural testosterone production, debilitating anxiety, and even steroid-induced psychosis and suicidal thoughts.**^{2,3}

This was not just an isolated case of one reckless supplements company. For instance, a recent scientific study identified 9 different **dangerous stimulants not approved by the FDA for human use in muscle-building and weight-loss dietary supplements sold on the US market.**⁴ Experimental drug “cocktails” have been repeatedly found in these types of supplements, endangering consumers of all ages, including children.⁵ Specifically, weight-loss and muscle-building supplements have been found to be laced with pesticides, heavy metals, anabolic steroids, banned pharmaceuticals, and other dangerous ingredients that can cause strokes, cancer, and severe liver injury serious enough to require transplants or cause death.^{6,7,8,9}

The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly cautions against teens using these products for any reason.^{10,11} Yet, alarmingly, there are no age restrictions on the sale of weight-loss and muscle-building supplements in California, leaving children, who are particularly vulnerable to deceptive marketing claims, with no protection from sellers of these products.

Extensive research documents the dangers of these products:

- Adolescent and young adult women who use OTC diet pills have **4-6 times the risk of being diagnosed with an eating disorder** within several years compared to non-using peers.^{12,13}
- Boys and young men who use muscle-building supplements have **more than 8 times the odds of initiating anabolic-androgenic steroid use** within several years compared with non-using peers.¹⁴
- A study of supplements-related adverse events reported to the FDA found that youth using weight-loss or muscle-building supplements, compared to those taking regular vitamins, have **3 times the risk for serious medical events, including hospitalization, emergency room visits, and death.**¹⁵
- **Weight-loss supplements account for fully a quarter of supplements-related emergency room visits in the US every year.**¹⁶
- A national study documented **a 50% increase in calls to US poison control centers** from 2005-2012 due to dietary supplements, many of which claimed to promote weight loss.¹⁷

Nearly 1 in 10 adolescents have used OTC diet pills,¹⁸ while muscle-building supplement use is even more common, with nearly 1 in 5 adolescent males reporting using these products.¹⁹ Promotion of weight-loss and muscle-building supplements is pervasive on social media, and 97% of the most popular videos on TikTok promoting these products provide no scientific evidence to support their health- or appearance-related claims.²⁰

We must take action now to protect California children. **Poorly regulated weight-loss and muscle-building supplements** pose serious risk to children. Common-sense age restrictions on the sale of these products put California's public health approach in line with physician recommendations. **We, the undersigned, urge your support for AB2030 in the upcoming Senate floor vote to protect young people in California from these dangerous products.**

On behalf of the organizations and individuals listed below,



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California Organizations:

Children's Advocacy Institute — Jessica K. Heldman, Executive Director, San Diego

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National Organizations:

Academy for Eating Disorders (AED) — Erin Quinn, CEO

Alaska Eating Disorders Association — Jess Rude, Executive Director

The Alliance for Eating Disorders Awareness — Johanna Kandel, Founder and Executive Director

Be Real USA — Denise Hamburger, Founder and Executive Director

Civiso — Stanley Huang, Founder

Eating Disorders Coalition — Christine M. Peat, PhD, President

Finxerunt Policy Institute / International Socioeconomics Laboratory — Ryan F. Ahmed, Chief Executive Officer & Founder

Multi-Service Eating Disorders Association (MEDA) — Monika Ostroff, LICSW, CEDS-S, Executive Director

National Association of Anorexia Nervosa and Associated Disorders (ANAD) — Jason Wood, Executive Director

National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) — Jessica Scheer, CEO, Executive Director

Project Heal — Whitney Trotter, CEO

Realize Your Beauty, Inc. — Stacey Lorin Merkl, Founder & Executive Director

Renfrew Center — Samuel Menaged, CEO

Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders (STRIPED) — S. Bryn Austin, ScD, Director

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