Lesson 16:Write an Argument

Read the passage and answer the questions that follow.

Labeling Rules Still in the Works

The 2010 U.S. health care law includes about 2,400 pages of rules and regulations. Contained in the law is the requirement that restaurant chains with twenty or more restaurants show calorie information on menus and menu boards. They must also display the recommended number of daily calories—2,000. Vending machines are also included in the requirement. The new law instructs the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to develop a national standard for labeling menus. This standard will be higher than the laws some states already have. Is this a necessary law? Is it a good law or is it bad for consumers and business? Considering both sides of the issue shows how difficult these questions are to answer.

First of all, a law similar to the federal law was passed in New York City, and it has shown no significant effect. Calorie information has been required on menus in restaurant and coffee chains in New York City since 2008. In 2009, a survey was conducted to study how this law affected consumer food choices. It compared the average calorie intake at these restaurants two weeks before and four weeks after the labeling. The findings showed there was no significant change in calorie intake after the law was passed. A broader study compared the average calorie intake of 15,000 restaurant customers a year before labeling to nine months after. This, too, showed no significant overall change. These studies seem to show that the law is not effective. However, people who reported using the calorie information consumed an average of 96 fewer calories per meal. This shows that the labeling could be effective if more people used the information.

Of course, as with most legislation, there are differing opinions about the new law. For example, one spokesperson for the National Restaurant Association was happy about the law. She said, "The association and industry were supportive because consumers will see the same types of information in more than 200,000 restaurant locations." On the other hand, the general counsel of the Competitive Enterprise Institute believes the government should not be involved in such actions. He states that if people want to know the information, they can look it up on the Internet. As he says, "This is simply not a federal issue."

In addition, there are the concerns of business owners themselves. The cost of implementing such a law can be enormous. Many small business owners believe they will be more disadvantaged than larger businesses. For example, figuring out the nutritional facts for each menu item can be very expensive. Some of the smaller chain restaurants will find it difficult to pay for this. They will also need to buy new menus and signs that display the information. However, one of the directors at the National Restaurant Association points out that a single rule for posting calorie information will be less expensive, in the long run, than individual cities and states making up their own laws. Also, as for the cost of new menus and boards, he points out that restaurants often change these items to show new prices and foods anyway.

While menu labels have not been solidly proven to help consumers make healthy choices, they do have their benefits. One director at the Center for Science in the Public Interest pointed out that many consumers want to lose weight. The labeling helps these consumers. For example, many people might think that a tuna fish sandwich has fewer calories than a roast beef sandwich. They would choose to eat tuna to help lose weight. However, knowing that the tuna has 50 percent more calories than the roast beef might change the

person's decision. Labeling helps people who want the information to find it when they need it.

As far as the studies showing there was no difference before and after calorie labeling, there are other studies that show different results. In 2013, a study published in the *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* reported on diners who were observed eighteen months after a menu labeling law began. It showed that customers at some restaurants consumed fewer overall calories. The study suggests that, over time, people will change their eating habits because of the labeling.

As of today, only a few cities and states have labeling laws. The national labeling law that is part of the Affordable Care Act passed in 2010 has still not been implemented. Even though labeling seems to offer many benefits to the consumer, the information to date is insufficient. More studies and arguments for and against such a law will have to be considered. The information to date is just not conclusive. As I have shown, many facts seem to support the implementation of such a law, but some do not.

1

Lana wrote the following sentences about the menu labeling law.

The law has not been put into effect. Some people want the law. Some people do not want the law.

Which choice below **best** shows how to rewrite these sentences to show a variety of sentence patterns?

- ○ A. The law has not been put into effect because some people want the law and some people do not want the law.
- ○ B. The law has not been put into effect. The issue is that some people want the law while others do not.
- ○ C. The law is what some people want. The law is what other people do not want. The law has not been put into effect.
- ○ D. Correct as is.

2

The writer wants to add a sentence to the end of the conclusion.

Which sentence **best** fits the content and style of the conclusion?

- ○ A. Maybe someone will come up with the answer pretty soon.
- ○ B. It is obvious that the law will need to be implemented immediately.
- ○ C. The final decision should be made in the near future.
- ○ D. It is up to the restaurant industry to decide if this law is fair or not.

3

This question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

Which of the following **best** describes the claim made by the author of this passage?

- ○ A. There is no definite proof that the labeling law is or is not beneficial to all.
- ○ B. Studies prove that the labeling law will benefit both consumers and businesses.
- ○ C. As of 2013, the national labeling law, which is part of the Affordable Care Act, has not been put into effect.
- ○ D. Smaller businesses will not be able to afford implementing the law.

Part B

Explain how you arrived at your answer to Part A. Include textual evidence to support your answer.
Answer:

4

According to the passage, which sentences give reasons why labeling menus is beneficial? Choose **all** that apply.

- ☐ A. It compared the average calorie intake at these restaurants two weeks before and four weeks after the labeling.
- ☐ B. . . . a single rule for posting calorie information will be less expensive, in the long run, than individual cities and states making up their own laws.
- ☐ C. Labeling helps people who want the information to find it when they need it.
- ☐ D. It showed that customers at some restaurants consumed fewer overall calories.
- ☐ E. Contained in the law is the requirement that restaurant chains with twenty or more restaurants show calorie information on menus and menu boards.
- ☐ F. As of today, only a few cities and states have labeling laws.

5

This question has two parts. Answer Part A and then answer Part B.

Part A

In the passage, how does the author use logos as a rhetorical appeal to persuade readers?

- ○ A. by giving the author's personal opinion about labeling laws
- ○ B. by citing surveys about labeling laws' effect on food choices
- ○ C. by describing people who would be helped by a labeling law
- ○ D. by quoting people from the National Restaurant Association

Part B

Write **two** or **three** sentences that justify your response to Part A. Include examples from the text, and explain how the author uses them to help persuade readers.
Answer:

Use both passages from this lesson to answer the question that follows.

Why Should Posting Calorie Information Be Required?

People in the food industry cannot agree. Should restaurants be required to post calorie information on their menus? Some government officials suggest that chain restaurants with twenty or more locations should be required to post the number of calories for each menu item. They would extend this requirement to bakeries, grocery stores, convenience stores, and coffee chains. However, I disagree. I do not believe that anyone in the food industry should be required to post calorie information. There are too many problems and unfair burdens involved in such a law.

First of all, the cost for businesses would be very high. Imagine the work and money involved in posting the calorie count for every unlabeled food item in a grocery store! As a member of the Food Marketing Institute points out, many supermarkets have thousands of items, such as prepared foods and bakery items, that change day by day. Even the Food and Drug Administration admits that the cost for businesses could be over $300 million.

Because of the high cost, the effectiveness of such a law needs to be considered. What is the purpose of labeling a food item with its calories? Some experts believe this practice would help to curb the obesity problem in our country. It would allow customers to consider the calories before choosing what to eat. However, there are many studies that show that this is not the result. For example, a study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* shows that even though items on a menu were labeled with calorie content, the labeling did not affect customer choices. People still ordered what they originally wanted. The study was done in New York City, where there was a labeling law. The study showed that consumers did not make healthier choices either before or after the law went into effect. Other studies from New York University and Duke-National University had similar results: Adding calorie information to menus did not affect the food choices consumers made.

Finally, this is just one more example of the government controlling our lives. There is already too much government involvement in what we do. We have tax laws, traffic laws, education laws, and thousands of other laws that we need to have a civilized society. I do not think we need the government involved in our food choices as well. If people want to know how many calories are in a particular food, they can find out for themselves. They don't need the government to require businesses to post it.

Therefore, I believe requiring food businesses to post calorie information is an unnecessary and expensive law. It does not help either the consumer or the business. This rule definitely should not be added to our health care law.

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6

The passage "Why Should Posting Calorie Information Be Required?" presents an argument about the menu labeling law that is part of the Affordable Care Act, and the passage "Labeling Rules Still in the Works" presents information about this same law. Think about the arguments, reasons, and supporting facts presented in both passages.

Then, write your own argument either for or against the labeling law. Be sure to include specific reasons and supporting facts from the sources to support your argument. Remember to use transitions and write in a formal style.

Answer:

Standards: ELA.6.C.1.3, ELA.6.C.1.5, ELA.6.EE.1.1, ELA.6.EE.6.1, ELA.6.R.2.4, ELA.6.R.3.4