



Press Release

AAFA Applauds Senate Version of FASTER Act Passage

Bill would add sesame as a major food allergen; expands public health focus on food allergies



Washington, D.C., December 9th, 2020 – Today the Senate passed its version of the FASTER Act, S.3451. The FASTER acronym stands for Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, and Research Act. This vote moves sesame closer to being recognized as a top allergen by law. It will also grow public knowledge of food allergies and direct more resources for the 32 million Americans living with food allergies.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) is a driving force behind making sure sesame gets added to the list of major allergens food manufacturers will have to include on labels. Over one million people in the U.S. have an allergy to sesame. It's also a major allergy for people across the globe and is already listed as a top allergen in some countries. Under AAFA's leadership, several

advocacy groups have joined forces to encourage lawmakers and the Food and Drug Administration to act.

“We're glad to see the Senate take this step. Getting sesame disclosed on food ingredient labels is a front and center issue for AAFA. Sesame can be a hidden ingredient often listed as a 'spice,' 'natural flavoring,' or under different names like 'tahini' or 'benne'. This puts people with a sesame allergy at greater risk for reactions which can be life-threatening,” said Kenneth Mendez, CEO, and president of the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. “We want sesame to be clearly listed on all food ingredient labels. The Senate just helped us get even closer to finally making this a reality.”

AAFA's community also continues to lead the call on making the FASTER Act law along with encouraging government action on listing sesame as a major allergen. AAFA thanks community members for sending comments to officials and responding to multiple campaigns requesting the government take more steps to protect people living with food allergies.

The Senate FASTER Act bill is not the same as what passed in the House earlier this fall. Because of that, it will have to go back to the House for a vote before being sent to the White House to be officially signed into law. AAFA will continue to work with the House on this revision.

AAFA encourages our community members to keep asking Congress to get the FASTER Act across the finish line. Advocacy efforts through AAFA's [Kids With Food Allergies](#) division can be supported via secure donation here: [Support Kids With Food Allergies](#)



Asthma and Allergy
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About AAFA

Founded in 1953, AAFA is the oldest and largest non-profit patient organization dedicated to saving lives and reducing the burden of disease for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through research, education, advocacy and support. AAFA offers extensive support for individuals and families affected by asthma and allergic diseases, such as food allergies and atopic dermatitis (eczema). Through its online patient support communities, network of local chapters and affiliated support groups, AAFA empowers patients and their families by providing practical, evidence-based information and community programs and services. AAFA is the only asthma and allergy patient advocacy group that is certified to meet the standards of excellence set by the National Health Council. For more information, visit www.aafa.org.