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Consumer Law

Law Firm Files RICO Suit Over Restaurant's Menu Claims

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By [Martha Neil](#)

A Washington, D.C., law firm has filed a federal class action against the Applebee's national restaurant chain, contending that its "Weight Watchers" menu items aren't as healthy as advertised.

Independent testing of the Weight Watchers menu choices actually being served at various Applebee's around the U.S. allegedly showed that "many dishes contain up to three times the amount of fat and more calories than advertised" on the restaurant's menu, reports the [Washington Business Journal](#). So a plaintiff customer filed suit on behalf of himself and others, seeking injunctive relief and damages under Kansas consumer protection law and the federal Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

"For instance, the suit says, Applebee's Weight Watchers Cajun Lime Tilapia is advertised as having 6 grams of fat and 310 calories, but when tested was found to actually contain more than twice as much fat (14.3 grams) and 25 percent more calories (401) than advertised," writes the [Kansas City Star](#).

"If I had known the truth," lead plaintiff Antonio Fidelis Valiente tells the newspaper, "I never would have eaten at Applebee's."

The lawsuit, which was filed in U.S. District Court in Kansas by the Gilbert Randolph law firm, names as defendants Applebee's International Inc., parent company DineEquity Inc., and Weight Watchers Inc., the Washington Business Journal reports. The plaintiff class includes all customers who purchased items from the Weight Watchers menu at Applebee's since it was introduced in 2004.

A DineEquity spokesperson says the company doesn't believe the suit has merit, declining to comment further.

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