



New California Law Guarantees Plant-Based Meal Options in Public Hospitals and Prisons

By Maya Gottfried
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Last week, California Gov. Jerry Brown signed a new law mandating that public hospitals, health care facilities, and prisons offer plant-based options at every meal. Senate Bill 1138, “Ensuring a Plant Based Meal Option,” guarantees that people in these institutions have access to food free of animal products.

“Whether to protect animals, our climate or our health, those of us who choose to eat a vegan diet can celebrate today with Gov. Brown’s signing of SB 1138,” says the bill’s author, California state Sen. Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley). “There’s a basic human right to nutritious food that meets health and cultural needs. SB 1138 makes sure that California custodial facilities respect that right.”

Evidence shows [growing interest](#) among Americans in moving toward a plant-based diet; however, those confined to health facilities and prisons are not always given that choice. In California, the new law promises that they will now have access to vegan meals.

“Thanks to Sen. Skinner and Gov. Brown for this historic law to provide plant-based options to hospital patients looking to fight heart disease, diabetes, and obesity—or who simply want a more healthful meal,” says Neal Barnard, MD, president of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine.

“We are elated that Gov. Brown sees the value in offering plant-based meals in prisons and medical facilities,” says Judie Mancuso, president and founder of Social Compassion in Legislation and the sponsor of SB 1138. “Plant-based foods are key to better health outcomes, fighting climate change, and reducing the number of animals in our food production.”

Ready to get started? Check out [Forks Meal Planner](#), FOK’s easy weekly meal-planning tool to keep you on a healthy plant-based path.

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