



March 16, 2007

The Honorable Andrew J. McDonald,  
The Honorable Michael P Lawlor  
Joint Committee on Judiciary  
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: HB 7327 – Tort Reform

Dear Chairs:

On behalf of the Grocery Manufacturers/Food Products Association (GMA/FPA<sup>1</sup>) I would like to support the proposals in House Bill 7327. The provisions in HB 7327 are intended to address the serious issue of frivolous lawsuits that claim a plaintiff's obesity or weight gain is the responsibility of a person who produces or sells food in accordance with government requirements.

Recently, trial lawyers for plaintiffs claiming overweight or obesity-related illnesses from consumption of foods and beverages have filed a number of civil lawsuits against restaurants and food manufacturers. Blaming the consequences of one's eating habits on restaurants and food manufacturers is an egregious erosion of personal responsibility in this country. In addition to wasting the resources of the courts, such frivolous lawsuits do nothing to address the serious issue of obesity.

The HB 7327 is narrowly focused. It focuses solely on providing protection from abusive suits seeking to blame others for an individual's dietary choices. Legitimate claims against false or misleading labels or misbranding would not be precluded by this bill, nor would lawsuits against foods that do not meet safety requirements.

In July, 2003, the Gallup organization released a poll demonstrating that 9 out of 10 Americans (89%) agree that fast food restaurants should not be held liable for the eating habits of their customers. A clear majority of Americans oppose frivolous lawsuits

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<sup>1</sup> The Grocery Manufacturers/Food Products Association (GMA/FPA) represents the world's leading food, beverage and consumer products companies. The association promotes sound public policy, champions initiatives that increase productivity and growth and helps to protect the safety and security of the food supply through scientific excellence. The GMA/FPA board of directors is comprised of fifty-two chief executive officers from the Association's member companies. The \$2.1 trillion food, beverage and consumer packaged goods industry employs 14 million workers, and contributes over \$1 trillion in added value to the nation's economy.

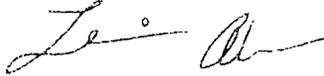
Chairwoman Norton  
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against food and beverage manufacturers, distributors and retailers. Currently, this type of legislation has become law in 23 states, with overwhelming bipartisan support. Legislators around the country understand the importance of keeping such frivolous lawsuits out of the courtroom.

The time has come for Connecticut to pass legislation that would stop abusive litigation by people who would seek to blame food companies for the products they eat. HB 7327 truly is common sense legislation that puts the focus back where it belongs: on personal responsibility.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of GMA/FPA. If you or your staff has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (617) 556-2929 or at [lalusic@gmabrands.com](mailto:lalusic@gmabrands.com).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lorin Alusic", written in black ink.

Lorin Alusic  
Director,  
State Affairs