

Good morning Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environmental Committee, my name is Erin Barringer and I am a mother from West Hartford whose family was directly affected by this summer's raw milk outbreak of e-coli O157.

Contaminated raw milk purchased at a retail store and inadequate consumer advisory warning contributed to my daughter becoming a victim of e-coli O157. I support the raised bills HB 6312-AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE OF ADULTERATED MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS and HB 6313 AN ACT CONCERNING RAW MILK.

We have good friends who last summer purchased raw milk at a retail store for their son aged 2 years 10 months. Their other child, a girl aged 12 months, did not drink the milk but still became infected with e-coli from her brother. Our friends' son became ill after drinking raw milk and during his hospitalization, I volunteered as a caregiver to their young daughter. At the time, no one knew that the daughter also had contracted e-coli O157 from her brother. We know now that person-to-person transfer of this illness is a reality among families, friends and day care environments.

Our daughter, then aged 2 years 10 months old, did not drink raw milk or any milk product. She was infected by e-coli O157 because of close contact with a playmate and friend who drank contaminated raw milk. Close contact can happen with our children and become a public health threat when an e-coli infection is involved.

Through close contact with the infected young sibling, my daughter contracted e-coli O157. There is no doubt that this happened because of the raw milk contaminated with e-coli O157, see the Public Health Department report titled Outbreak of E. coli O157 Associated with Raw Milk Consumption - Connecticut, 2008 published February 2009.

My daughter was hospitalized and began treatment for hemolytic-uremic syndrome also know as HUS. For those unfamiliar with HUS, it is a complication caused by the e-coli O157, and a resulting shiga toxin. The syndrome destroys red blood cells and can cause acute renal failure.

Our daughter required surgery to permit 24-hour peritoneal dialysis, blood transfusions, platelet transfusions, oxygen support due to fluid overload, and a feeding tube to provide nourishment. She also required a catheter and regular blood tests throughout her hospitalization. She contracted a staph infection; she required blood pressure medication and needed a drug lasix which can cause hearing loss. I just had her tested this week for potential hearing loss from this drug. After 17 days in the hospital, mostly in Pediatric Intensive Care, we were released but she still required a feeding tube and weekly physical therapy appointments for weeks.

Even though it has been 6 months since her illness, she still requires quarterly blood testing to determine if there is long term kidney damage. This blood testing is very difficult and traumatic for our toddler but this testing is necessary to determine whether any long term kidney damage has occurred.

I support limiting the sale of raw milk to farms only. Raw milk should not be available in retail stores because average consumers may not know the potential consequences and the potential dangers to children or others at risk like the elderly.

The farm-to-consumer distribution model is a model in which the consumer has made an effort to learn about a farm, go to the farm to observe the conditions of the farm, and also have the opportunity to review relevant information about the farmer's testing of the raw milk.

I support the consumer advisory warning label on the raw milk container and a consumer advisory sign stating "Warning: Raw milk has not been pasteurized and may contain harmful bacteria. Pregnant women, children, the elderly and persons with lowered resistance to disease have the highest risk of serious illness from use of this product".

Raw milk is dangerous because of the risk of contamination and potentially harmful bacteria. Consumers need to be aware of the risks of drinking raw milk especially if the

intended users are pregnant women, children, elderly and those with lowered resistance to disease.

Drinking raw milk has risks which the consumer should be aware of before using the product. I am not willing to take that risk for my family and unfortunately we were affected because there was no labeling letting our friends know of serious illness potential to children from raw milk.

Today's buzz words such as organic, natural, whole and raw can be confusing and misleading. Parents wanting to choose nutritional foods for their family may believe raw milk is safer and healthier than pasteurized milk unless they know the serious risks which better labeling will identify. A family should not unknowingly put their children and other children at risk of serious illness and a clear warning will help prevent a tragic situation.

Our friends, their children and our family still have to worry about how the events of last summer's raw milk e-coli outbreak will affect our children throughout their lives. Our children will have to undergo monitoring by specialists for quite sometime.

I would like parents to remember these words before giving a child raw milk; e-coli, HUS, intensive care, acute renal failure, peritoneal dialysis, acute anemia, feeding tube, hypertension, kidney transplant, and death. The proposed warning doesn't have these words but at least it will let consumers know that children have the highest risk of serious illness from using this product.

I want to thank the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Public Health for bringing forth this legislation. I thank the Committee for your time and consideration of these important bills.

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