

Submitted for written testimony for bills 6313 and 6312

Dear Representatives,

I am writing to you regarding bills 6312, 6313 and 5504. Certainly many people have contacted you regarding how important raw milk and cheese is and how raw milk has benefited them and their health. Although it is an important part of my life and I have benefited from it health wise, I will not be discussing that with you in this letter.

Connecticut is my home and I have lived here for 38 years and plan to live here for the rest of my life. My ideals and values do not necessarily coincide with everyone that lives in our fine state, but each person has the freedom to be who and what they are.

Small businesses are an important part of this state and it is in the best interest of our legislators to help them whenever it is possible; otherwise we will be left with a state of casinos, big box stores and chain restaurants. There will no longer be any pride of the great heritage of Connecticut if we cut out all of the truly hard working small businesses that make this state unique.

The small raw milk dairy farmers need to be supported and encouraged to continue processing in this state. The legislation in bill 6313 limiting sales to only the farms will cut their business between 30 and 100 percent depending on the farm. How would Wal- Mart continue to do business if their sales were cut to that extreme? They would not.

There are no guarantees on anything in life. We all take chances from the moment our feet hit the floor in the morning. It's part of life, it's part of living in a free country. The proposed testing in bill 6313 will surely put the raw milk and raw milk cheese producers out of business. This testing exceeds all other states and does NOT ensure the safety of one person. By the time the test results have been read, the milk has already been sold and drunk. Safety is NOT behind this legislation. This is a strategic move to cripple these farmers financially. Again, there are no guarantees on anything in life, but if there were a bacterial outbreak in Connecticut raw milk, the good news is that because raw milk sales are localized, it would be easy to contain, inform and recall. We can guarantee that there will be no need to recall these products from other countries as they are now doing for peanut butter! The testing as written in 6313 could cost as much as \$16,000 yearly for a particular farm. The cost was figured by the number of cows on the farm. Connecticut raw milk producers have a very good record. The case of Town Farm Dairy is the exception to the rule. You must know that it was not a privately owned dairy, and the proper labeling of their milk has been questioned. Please do not punish our raw milk dairy farmers and push them out of business because of the unique circumstances at Town Farm Dairy that has now gone out of business.

Your support of rewriting bill 5504 is requested as well. 5504 will basically overwrite 6313 in the effect that the small retailers that sell raw milk will not be able to pay this outrageous license fee and therefore raw milk would mostly have to be sold on the farms, therefore cutting the raw milk dairy farmers business by 30-100% as stated above. Please rewrite the bill and allow retailers that sell less than 100 gallons a day be exempt. \$500 is the minimum fee of 5504 and is very far from the \$30 they are currently paying. Let the big retailers pay the fees. It will not mean nearly as much to their bottom line.

Let me end with this thought; *the founder of Connecticut, Thomas Hooker gave an important speech in 1638. In the speech he stated that the people should rule the government rather than the government ruling the people.* Please hear what the people have to say and reject the legislation in 6313 that limits sales to the farms, increases testing, and a skull and crossbones poster at the milk coolers. Also, reject the legislation in 6312 that could lead to a class A misdemeanor. Adding the sale of adulterated milk and milk products to the list of violent crimes of class A misdemeanors does not make any sense. And lastly, rewrite bill 5504 and make the small retailers exempt from the increase in the dairy license fee.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your reply concerning this letter,
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