

Misters Chairmen and members of the committee,

I am Allison Barringer Beed resident of West Hartford, here today in support of Bill's 6313, "An Act Concerning Raw Milk" and 6312, "An Act Concerning the Sale of Adulterated Milk and Milk Products".

This August my three year old niece became suddenly and gravely ill with HUS (a form of E-Coli bacteria) passed to her by her friend. This little boy had consumed raw milk that was contaminated with the E-Coli bacteria and he himself came down with HUS. Raw milk is known to carry Salmonella, E-Coli, Listeria, Tuberculosis, and Bacterial Meningitis. These diseases if contracted can harm anyone, but children, pregnant women, elderly, and persons with compromised immune systems are especially vulnerable. When my niece became ill with HUS nothing could be done except to try and make her comfortable and let the disease run its deadly course. This meant over 16 days in the hospital, kidney dialysis, breathing, and feeding tubes, collapsed lung, oxygen tent and much more.

I come from a dairy farming family in Maryland. I understand the work and hardships that go hand in hand with farming of any kind. Each farm is run as a small business unit and managed according to the best practices. Therefore farming as any other small business is constantly evaluating and adapting to an ever changing consumer demand and market. Dairy farms are declining across the country due in part to increased milk production and improvement in efficiency. In 2006 Connecticut's production of raw milk represented .2% of all milk produced. We should not allow this small percentage of farms to continue to have the opportunity to spread these terrible diseases.

The perils of raw milk have long been known. President Richard M. Nixon's brothers died from drinking raw milk from the family cow. Harold died from Bacterial Tuberculosis and Arthur died from Bacterial Meningitis. Louis Pasteur in 1865 discovered the process of heating milk to 63 degrees, then rapidly cooling it to 10 degrees, and storing it at 50 degrees. This simple process destroys harmful bacteria without materially changing the compensation, flavor or nutritive value of milk. This process saved hundreds of thousands of lives according to the London Congressional testimony of 1909 (presented by Nathan Straus in 1909). The New Haven Council of 100 estimated that 6 million babies had been saved through pasteurization since 1892 (Nathan Straus, 1910).

I find it silly that in our medically advanced and consumer savvy time we are even here spending time on this long proven public safety issue. It leads me to wonder if next we will question Florence Nightingale's ground breaking finding on the benefit of hand washing in the prevention of the spread of disease.

In conclusion we have so many risks in our daily lives we must live with, but drinking unpasteurized milk should not be one of them. In fact I can't help but conclude that we will all be negligent the next time a child or adult has to suffer this terrible disease simply because we haven't followed what Pasteur taught us 149 years ago.

Please vote in favor of this bill.