

Thank you Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and other distinguished members of the Joint Committee of Environment, for taking the time to read my testimony in support of HB-06312 and HB-O6313.

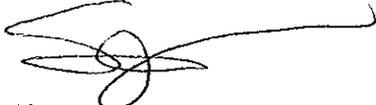
I am a friend of two of the families whose children contracted E. coli and then HUS from tainted raw milk last summer. It is difficult to explain how painful and terrifying it was to helplessly stand by while two of my children's friends spent weeks literally fighting for their lives in the hospital. I am so thankful that both children are out of the hospital and off dialysis. Unfortunately they will need ongoing follow up and monitoring well into the future because the long-term effects to their kidneys are unknown.

I want to assure you that my support for these bills is not simply a knee jerk reaction to the trauma experienced by these kids, their families and our community. The unfortunate events of this past summer were an unwanted but important education for all of us. I know one of the mothers who gave her child raw milk. She did it because she had done research and believed that raw milk was more easily digestible and provided more health benefits than pasteurized milk. I know for a fact that despite her research, she was not aware of the extremely high risk for E. coli and other food borne diseases in raw milk. If she had been aware, I know she would have determined the benefits did not outweigh the risks. She would not have fed her child raw milk. This is why it is so important to make sure this information is clear and readily available to someone before they purchase and consume raw milk. Most people are not aware of how highly contagious E.coli is. When we heard one of the kids was sick, several families in our community offered to care for his sister while his parents were with him in the hospital. None of the doctors involved or the DPH told the parents that their daughter could have contracted E. coli from her brother, or that she could pass it on to other children. As a result, another child, one who never had any direct contact with raw milk, was infected and ended up in ICU with HUS. The same thing could have happened to any number of children in our community, including my daughter, if we had unknowingly exposed our children as well.

Because E.coli is easily transmitted by hand to mouth, toddlers and preschoolers are at an especially high risk of contracting these bacteria. To prevent this from happening again, the sale of raw milk needs to be curtailed to the farms where it is produced. Clear and informative warning labels need to be affixed to bottles, and warning posters need to be placed at the farms. This bill will not only protect individual health, but the public health of Connecticut.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I urge you to pass this important legislation.

Sincerely,



Shannon Jacovino
30 Selden Hill Dr.
West Hartford, CT 06107
(860) 561-3321