

March 5,2013

To: Children's Committee
From: Theresa Velenzas, Glastonbury CT
Re: RB 6527 An Act Concerning Genetically Engineered Baby Food

Good afternoon Madame Chair, Mr. Chairman, Co-Vice Chairs, Ranking Members, and members of the Children's Committee. My name is Theresa Velenzas and I am here today to support Raised Bill 6527: An Act Concerning Genetically Engineered Baby Food.

I want to thank you Representative Urban for introducing this Bill. As a mom trying to navigate the supermarket to make the best possible choices for my family I can tell you it is a frightening proposition. The reality is that as much as one may try to grow and make their own food we live in times where we need to rely on providers to grow and prepare at least some foods for us. Our food system allows for a lot of layers that take away transparency. At the very least a labeling law would enable its restoration. Although there are studies that show Genetically Modified Foods are unhealthy, there are many others that purport they have no impact on our health. As a lay person, my thought is that perhaps we need more studies. As a lay person I wonder how these GMOs can be in our food system since the 1990s and generally regarded as safe (GRAS), without the benefits of exhaustive tests to PROVE they are. I find it frustrating that there is so much confusing information out there. One of the many problems associated with GMO consumption has to do with fertility. I grew up in the 1990s and unknowingly consumed a lot of GMOs. I had fertility problems and after exhaustive tests that were repeated over and over again, I received several clean bills of health and NO medical explanation. I now wonder if the problems I had were related to GMOs but we don't have sufficient studies. Labeling would allow for that. We need to label GMOs. We need more studies to ensure their safety for our children. We can't just FEED them to our children, need to KNOW. Labeling is a practical first step out of this mess we've found ourselves in.

In recent years, started reading about nutrition and changed my diet drastically. I am my family's "nutritionist". I spend a lot of time planning meals from scratch, using whole ingredients and trying to provide the best wholesome diet I can. And the more I research, the more I find problems with engineered ingredients whose safety is untested, unproven, undocumented, yet there, on my baby's teething biscuits, in the formula I had to use temporarily to supplement breastfeeding, in their cereal, in their bread, their buttery spread, to name a few.

Food not PROVEN to be safe should not be in our supermarkets. At the very LEAST it should be labeled. I cannot fathom why we need to be having this discussion today. I cannot believe that after so much saturation of GMOs in our American food chain, we are still struggling State to State to pass labeling laws. I

feel so betrayed by the companies I trusted all these years to deliver the wholesome goodness promised. I wonder if I always made the right choices for my children or if something "new" will be uncovered next.

As a mom, I am here to support this important task you have before you as a Committee. I want you to know that I have been and will be meeting with more parents in my community to facilitate informational sessions about what is happening in our food chain and how important it is for you to hear their voices. As a mom and a CT resident I am here today to support CT parents' freedom to know what is in their children and baby's food - the same freedom enjoyed by citizens in over 60 other countries including Australia, Europe, New Zealand, Brazil, and China . I thank you for working on something that will further transparency and labeling of a basic need- our children's food and sustenance for life. I wish you the best of luck in this important work you have before you. Connecticut may be small but we are mighty and we can do this. I would welcome the opportunity to answer questions and meet with you or assist in any way possible. Please feel free to contact me any time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Theresa Velenzas
TVelenzas@sbcglobal.net
Glastonbury CT
(860) 478-7430