

**Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health**  
*To Oppose Proposed House Bill 5606: An Act Concerning Home-Based Bakeries*

To the Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Public Health Committee  
February 27, 2013

Good afternoon, distinguished Co-Chairs and Members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Karen Spargo, President of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health (CADH) and Director of Health of the Naugatuck Valley Health District, serving the towns of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck, Seymour and Shelton.

CADH opposes *Proposed House Bill 5606: An Act Concerning Home-Based Bakeries*, if the intent is to allow baking in a personal kitchen. CADH supports efforts to promote small businesses and enhance community access to local food products. However, CADH does not support a bill that would pose significant and unacceptable risks to the public of contracting foodborne illnesses (bakeries are not immune), especially when there are viable alternatives. Currently, anyone wishing to bake goods for sale in a personal kitchen may do so by seeking permission to use an already licensed kitchen in the community.

Municipal health authorities and district departments of health inspect bakeries and other food establishments throughout Connecticut to ensure safe food handling and sanitary practices. Such regular inspections are critical to protecting food products from contamination and keeping the public safe.

As a practical matter, local health departments would be unable to inspect bakeries based in a personal kitchen with the same frequency or thoroughness, if at all, as bakeries completely separate from the home kitchen. In general, bakeries in Connecticut cannot refuse entry to a sanitarian wishing to conduct a food inspection. But residents have constitutional rights to refuse entry to sanitarians wishing to enter their *homes*. The existence of home-based bakeries would diminish the value and importance of the regulations required of licensed bakeries; they could simply circumvent the Public Health Code by refusing entry. This two-tier system could then undermine the ability of local health departments to regulate any bakery, inside or outside of a personal kitchen.

Allowing baking in inadequately regulated home environments could have catastrophic public health consequences. Baking for friends and family is not the same as baking for the public, and very few personal kitchens could comply with the Public Health Code. Without adequate oversight to ensure adherence with food safety protocols, there is nothing, for example, to ensure that foods are kept at proper temperatures before, during and after preparation.

Moreover, depending on the municipality, even if bakeries were allowed in personal kitchens, they may have to overcome local zoning requirements to operate. For example, some towns do not allow manufacturing on personal property.

CADH supports bakeries that may exist on one's personal property but whose baking and food storage areas are completely separate from the personal home kitchen. This arrangement, arguably already allowed by the Public Health Code, enables local public health directors to ensure adherence to proper food safety protocols. But again, to protect the public, CADH remains opposed to any measure that allows baking in a personal kitchen.

CADH is a nonprofit organization comprised of Connecticut's 71 local health departments and districts. Local health directors are the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and are critical providers of essential public health services at the local level in Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration.