



## State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

**REPRESENTATIVE TONY HWANG**  
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**MEMBER**  
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PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

### Testimony

#### In support of H.B. 6519 An Act Concerning The Labeling of Genetically Engineered Food

**Public Health**  
**March 15, 2013**

Esteemed leadership and members of the CT General Assembly Public Health Committee, I am sincerely appreciative of your time and work on behalf of the CT residents that you represent so well. Thank you. My name is State Representative Tony Hwang, 134th House District, representing portions of Fairfield and Trumbull.

I am writing to urge your support of CT HB 6519, which would require mandatory labeling of foods containing Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). We believe we have a fundamental right to know what is in our food so we can make informed choices about what we feed our families. By mandating GMO labeling, this bill would give us the transparency that countries like Japan, Australia, Brazil, China, and all 15 European Union Countries already enjoy. Polls conducted by professional news organizations including the Washington Post, MSNBC, and Reuters/NPR consistently show that over 90% of consumers want GM ingredients labeled. Connecticut is one of several states currently considering mandatory labeling of foods containing GMOs.

GMOs are ubiquitous in our food supply. Over 80% of processed foods sold in US grocery stores contain at least one genetically engineered ingredient, typically soy, corn, canola, sugar, and cottonseed oil. GMOs are not natural and cannot be created through traditional crossbreeding methods. Rather, GMOs are created through laboratory processes where DNA is extracted from one species of plant, animal, bacteria or virus and forced into another unrelated species of plant

or animal to exactly confer a desired trait to a food crop such as the ability to resist the application of herbicides or produce its own pesticides.

Some may argue that requiring GMO labeling will prohibitively increase costs for both manufacturers and consumers. And it is a critical consideration in our challenging economic times; we can ill afford to hurt our businesses. Yet studies conducted in both the US and Canada demonstrate that the costs are reasonable and in countries where labeling is mandatory, no impact on consumers or manufacturers was seen. It is important to recognize that multi-national consumer package companies such as Nestle, Coca-Cola, and Kraft Foods have already complied with GMO labeling in their food products throughout the world, while still producing a separate one for the US – and those companies have continued to succeed and thrive.

I want to stress again – this bill is a reiteration of a fundamental right to know what is in our food supply. We have a right to insist on transparency and the freedom to make an informed and educated decision to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This bill has widespread bipartisan support, as evidenced by the sponsoring legislators from both parties, and I want to thank retired house member Richard Roy for his past leadership and education to me on this issue. In closing, I want to thank the Public Health Committee and its leadership and members for allowing me this opportunity to speak with you and I hope you will favorably pass this bill out of your committee.