

My name is Amanda Wendt and I am from Trumbull. I am here today to ask the Public Health Committee to support Bill HB 6519 AN ACT CONCERNING LABELING GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD.

I am a mother to two young children, a small business owner and a member of the leadership council of GMO Free CT. I became aware of Genetically Modified Organisms in our food system just about two years ago after watching Robyn O'Brien – the Founder of the AllergyKids Foundation, give a TEDx talk.

I have a background in communications and worked for a large Pharmaceutical company for five years here in Connecticut. During that time I learned about the process of taking a drug from its initial discovery and development through approval by the FDA to the ultimate goal of a doctor prescribing to the general public. On average that takes 8 to 10 years and 1000s of people in clinical trials. These trials take place over four phases, with each phase needing approval before continuing on to the next. I saw how diligently these scientists and physicians worked and how they met every step of the FDA approval process. During my time with the company some drugs didn't make it out of clinical trials. And one, after being on the market for years was ultimately pulled. This happened because of Phase 4 of the FDA's drug process where prescription drugs are monitored once they enter the market. Post Marketing Surveillance Trials as they are also called, are conducted after a drug has been approved for consumer sale. Pharmaceutical companies have several objectives one being to monitor a drug's long-term effectiveness and impact on a patient's quality of life.

I assumed that something similar must happen with foods and additives and that the companies creating these food items went through the same rigorous testing. I learned this wasn't true. As I dug deeper I found out that these GMOs only need ninety days of research to be given the GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) status others have discussed today. What concerned me more was that the FDA scientists disagreed on the safety of these foods and yet GMOs were still given the ok to enter the food system. I can't even imagine if we applied this same GRAS status to pharmaceuticals and I certainly understand why we don't. But how then, can a seed whose DNA has been altered and is a patented item, not be? And with all of the research you will hear about today, that proves after 90

Legislative Public Health Committee  
Public Hearing on HB 6519  
March 15, 2013  
Testimony by Amanda J. Wendt

days of testing issues begin with the health of the rodents, shouldn't these go through a similar Phase 4 clinical trial? Instead they are unleashed on an unknowing, all-consuming population.

I think the 62 countries that already require labeling are doing the right thing.

My job as a parent is to nurture my children. To allow them to grow strong minds and healthy bodies that will give them the opportunity to be stellar members of society. Part of that job is feeding my children healthy food. I do not believe that GMOs can be called "generally recognized as safe" and I do not trust the FDA or these companies to provide safe food for my children or the families of Connecticut.

Until the Federal government requires long-term testing or a way to track GMOs effect on our health, I deserve the ability for myself and my family to opt out of **this** clinical trial. The only way I can do that is if they are labeled. I implore the Connecticut General Assembly to step up and do the right thing. Please label foods that have been created with ingredients from GMOs and give people in Connecticut the Right to Know if it is GMO.

Thank you for your time.