

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson, Vice chairs, Ranking members, and members of the committee: I'm here in support of HB 6519.

My name is Beth Beisel, and I'm a registered dietitian. That means that I received a bachelor's degree in nutritional sciences, interned in a hospital, and passed a national registration examination. I also have to take continuing education credits to maintain my registration.

I have had a nutrition consulting practice for over 20 years. I'm here today to tell you how critical it is that consumers have access to transparent labels. Since food allergies have become more common, it is important that people who are told to avoid genetically engineered foods can. Right now the task is a very difficult one, and often discouraging. There are approximately 100 ingredients in processed foods that come from corn or soy, 2 of the most prevalent genetically engineered foods. It is time consuming and confusing for people to read food labels and search for the 100 or so particular ingredients in each product. Some people are lucky; they can just buy organic or non gmo project verified, to avoid GMOs, but not everyone can do this because it is more expensive to buy organic.

Some of the ingredients that may come from GMOs include: Vitamin E, Vitamin B12, citric acid, maltodextrine, textured vegetable protein, and soy isolates. It will be easier and safer for people with food allergies or any malady that might be related to ingestion of genetically engineered products, if it just simply states it on the label.

I believe that the sudden infusion of these ingredients into our food supply and the increasing rates of conditions we are currently seeing, including autoimmune disease, inflammatory bowel disease, food allergies, and celiac disease, which I never even learned about in school, in the 1980s, could be related. I realize correlation is not causation, but correlation should be investigated. And it is impossible to investigate without the liability, accountability, and trace-ability that labeling will afford the citizens of CT.

It's not just people with food allergies. We are all ingesting these ingredients every day. Babies get them in formula and teething crackers. Children get them in birthday cake with frosting, soda, Halloween candy and school lunches. Adults get them when they eat a salad covered in dressing made with vegetable or canola oil. And the elderly get them when they are prescribed nutritional supplements which are primarily corn, soy, canola, and sugar beets.

This is not a partisan issue; it is a human issue, and it affects every single one of us, including you and me, on a daily basis.

Please support this bill, and thank you for your time.

