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March 14, 2013

**RE: HB 6519**

I am addressing House Bill 6519, An Act Concerning the Labeling of Genetically Engineered Foods. As a Connecticut citizen, I am concerned by the current nonexistence of labeling foods containing Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs). Connecticut legislators have recognized the importance of banning pesticides from school grounds and playing fields to protect the health of the children who come in contact with those areas, yet these same children are consuming foods daily that contain GMOs. GMO crops are sprayed with pesticides while growing and may contain pesticides within the plants themselves. As many countries in Europe have already taken action to safeguard the health of their populations by banning GMO foods and require the American food manufacturers to adhere to those restrictions by modifying their ingredients to sell in Europe, those same manufacturers should certainly be called on to label their GMO foods for consumers here in our state. According to the Institute For Responsible Technology's 2011 publication *Doctor's Health Warning: Avoid Genetically Modified Foods*, "the American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM) urges physicians to advise all patients to avoid genetically modified (GM) foods due to animal studies which indicate serious health risks associated with GM food."

The Children's Committee, this week, recognized the importance of labeling baby food that contains GMOs and voted 11-1 in favor of HB 6527 which requires labeling. I would hope the Public Health committee would recognize the importance of giving Connecticut families the right to know what is in all the food they are purchasing. With rising health costs, unprecedented cancer rates in children and adults, would it not be prudent to at the very least allow consumers to opt out of purchasing food items that may potentially put themselves as well as their families at risk? Grocery shopping should not be a guessing game. Please ask yourselves what you want your legacy to be. Do you want to be held hostage by the biotech industry or do you want to take action that could potentially safeguard the health of many, including yourselves and your families? I implore you to act to protect all Connecticut citizens and vote yes to requiring the labeling of GMO products being sold in our state. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lauralyn Lewis