

VAUGHAN HB 6519

To Whom It Concerns:

I plan to be present at the Public Health Committee hearing on Friday, March 15th as HB 6519 is heard. I would like to present the following testimony.

Quite a few years ago there was a commercial in which "Mother Nature" got angry and furiously flashed lightning and thunder shouting "You can't fool Mother Nature"! I feel a little bit like that when I think about Genetically Modified foods. Nature provided us with an amazing array of foods which allowed humankind to thrive for millions of years. Today we have companies that believe they have the right to patent Mother Nature's seeds, and to alter the DNA of these seeds. Our FDA has decided that it is ok for these companies to verify the safety of their own product. So since 1996 these foods have been supplied to us without our knowledge, a fact I only recently learned.

Unfortunately we do not know how safe they are, yet independent studies and anecdotal evidence strongly suggest that many diseases that are on the rise may be caused or exacerbated by these genetically modified foods.

In my immediate family, my husband was diagnosed in 2010 with terminal pancreatic cancer. He ate a lot of sugar and processed foods. What GE foods in his diet might have been a factor in this disease? We don't know. Our food labels don't tell us. In early 2011 my younger daughter was treated for breast cancer. Were GE foods part of the cause? We have no way of knowing. My other daughter has gastro-intestinal problems. Are these exacerbated by GE foods? We don't know. My 7 year old granddaughter broke out in a rash the first time she was given peanut butter. From age 2 until 6 she had to be kept free of peanuts and tree nuts. Her 3 year old brother has been kept peanut free but still showed a slight reaction to a recent skin test, so needs further testing. The rate of peanut allergies has doubled since 1997, and let me tell you it is very scary to know that a peanut exposure could be deadly. There is a theory that there may be a link between the rise in peanut allergies and genetically engineered soy. Our family reads every single label on every product we bring into our home to make sure they are nut-free. Thank God for those labels! They are protecting the lives of my grandchildren! In addition, my granddaughter has been diagnosed with ADHD and my grandson with apraxia, a speech disability. There is some evidence that genetically modified foods may be a factor in both of these cases. That is why I believe the labeling of Genetically Modified Organisms is so important, not only for my family, but for all families. Only by knowing what is in our food are we able to make the right choices to provide for the health and safety of ourselves and our children.

I thank the Connecticut legislature for considering HB6519 and HB6527. As a proud Connecticut resident, I would be delighted to see Connecticut lead the way in protecting its citizens and providing us with the right to know what is in our food.

Sincerely,

Anne Vaughan
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