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GENERAL LAW COMMITTEE TESTIMONY

By Stan Sorkin, President
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TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB No. 5347: AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF LATEX GLOVES AT FOOD BUSINESSES

The Connecticut Food Association (CFA) is the state trade association that conducts programs in public affairs, food safety, research, education and industry relations on behalf of its 240 member companies—food retailers, wholesalers, distributors, and service providers in the state of Connecticut. CFA's members in Connecticut operate approximately 300 retail food stores and 130 pharmacies. Their combined estimated annual sales volume of \$5.7 billion represents 75% of all retail food store sales in Connecticut. CFA's retail membership is composed of independent supermarkets, regional firms, and large multi-store chains employing over 30,000 associates. The majority of our members are family owned privately owned supermarkets. Our goal is to create a growth oriented economic climate that makes Connecticut more competitive with surrounding states.

First, let me state that members of the CFA are concerned about the health and safety of our customers and our associates. The common practice is that food preparation is not done with latex gloves. However, the broad wording of the bill is problematic for the safe and sanitary operation of a grocery store. Latex gloves, at times, are the best protection for associates engaged in the cleaning and sanitation of equipment functions performed at store level. Banning of gloves would increase the risk of chemical reactions and injuries to these associates.

As with all allergies, it would be best if the customer would notify a store associate that he or she has a latex allergy and remind the associate not use latex gloves while servicing them.