



38 Hungerford Street – Hartford, CT 06106 – www.ctrestaurant.org
Phone: (860) 278-8008

**Testimony Before the General Law Committee
January, 2015**

HB 5347 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF LATEX GLOVES AT FOOD BUSINESSES

The Connecticut Restaurant Association (CRA) represents over 600 restaurants and affiliated businesses across the state. Our members range from quick serve to casual to fine dining establishments. The Connecticut hospitality industry employs an estimated 145,000 people, making up 9% of our states' workforce. Restaurants are a driving force in the state's economy and generate tremendous tax revenue.

Restaurants in Connecticut take allergies, food allergens, foodborne illnesses, contamination, and the safety of their customers and staff very seriously.

Many establishments have their own specific procedures in place to address each of the aforementioned issues, but all are mandated by the Connecticut Public Health Code to employ a Qualified Food Operator. A QFO is defined as a food operator employed in a full-time position who has demonstrated knowledge of safe food handling techniques. A QFO is required to train all other food preparation personnel, maintain written documentation of a training program and training records of individual employees, and make those records available to the local health department upon request. If the qualified food operator is not on site, they are required to designate a trained alternate who is.

The CRA is a DPH approved testing organization and utilizes the National Restaurant Association's ServSafe Manager Text book and test to teach food safety courses in Connecticut. Included in the course and text book is a section regarding single-use gloves, guidelines on usage and suggestions on alternatives for staff and customers who may have a latex sensitivity or allergy. Each chapter of the ServSafe Manager book includes a chapter summary, chapter review case study, study questions and answers. At the end of the ServSafe class, a test is given and a score of 75% or above must be attained to pass and receive a ServSafe certificate, which then must be posted in the establishment.

It is estimated that approximately 1% of the U.S. population has a latex allergy. While gloves are not used in all restaurants, both latex and vinyl gloves are used for food preparation in restaurants across the country and have proved effective in keeping food safe from contamination.

While HB 5347 is well intentioned, we believe the best course of action is education and customers informing restaurant staff of their latex allergy to ensure the safety of all.
