

Testimony of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health
To Oppose Proposed House Bill 6270: An Act Concerning Home Bakeries

To the Distinguished Co-Chair
March 3, 2015

CADH opposes *Proposed House Bill 6270: An Act Concerning Home Bakeries*, if the intent is to allow baking in home-based kitchen. CADH supports efforts to promote small businesses and enhance community access to local food products. However, CADH does not support a bill that would pose significant and unacceptable risks to the public of contracting foodborne illnesses, especially when there are viable alternatives. Currently, anyone wishing to bake goods for sale in a personal kitchen may do so by seeking permission to use an already licensed kitchen in the community

In CT, local health authorities inspect bakeries and other food service establishments to ensure safe food handling and sanitary practices. Such regular inspections are critical to protecting food products from contamination and keeping the public safe.

As a practical matter, local health departments would be unable to inspect home-based bakeries because residents have constitutional rights to refuse entry to sanitarians wishing to enter their *homes*. The existence of home-based bakeries would diminish the value and importance of the regulations required of commercially based licensed bakeries and food service establishments; they could simply circumvent the Public Health Code by relocating operations to their home. This two-tier system could then undermine the State's ability to regulate any bakery inside or outside of a home-based setting.

Allowing baking in inadequately regulated environments could have catastrophic public health consequences. Baking for friends and family is not the same as baking for the public, and very few personal kitchens could comply with the Public Health Code. Without adequate oversight to ensure adherence with food safety protocols, there is nothing, for example, to ensure that foods are kept at proper temperatures before, during and after preparation.

Moreover, depending on the municipality, even if bakeries were allowed in personal kitchens, they may have to overcome local zoning requirements to operate. For example, some towns do not allow manufacturing on personal property.

Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) regulations establishing provisions for home-based bakeries will not affect the applicability of the Connecticut Public Health Code, and could likely be in direct conflict with such regulations, creating confusion and undermining the intent of the Connecticut Public Health Code. Furthermore as stated above, regular site inspections are critical to protecting public health. Even if the concern regarding access to a private dwelling is somehow addressed, CADH also questions the capacity of the DCP to provide adequate regular inspections.

CADH supports food service activities on one's personal property where preparation, baking and food storage areas are completely separate from the personal home kitchen and private dwelling area. This arrangement, [arguably already allowed by the Public Health Code], enables local public health directors to ensure adherence to proper food safety protocols. But again, to protect the public, CADH remains opposed to any measure that allows baking in a home-based kitchen.

CADH is a nonprofit organization comprised of Connecticut's 74 local health departments and districts. Local health directors are the statutory agents of the Commissioner of Public Health and are critical providers of essential public health services at the local level in Connecticut. Thank you for your consideration.