

Testimony in Support of Raised House Bill No. 5300
An Act Concerning the Use of Genetically Modified Organisms in Children's Food
Submitted by: Rev. Cynthia Willauer
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Senator Bartholomeo, Representative Urban, and distinguished members of the Committee on Children

I am Cynthia Willauer, and I serve the First Congregational Church of Old Lyme as Minister for the Care of Creation. I serve the Environmental Ministry Team of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC in this same capacity.

You will have heard from others who write on behalf of the Connecticut Conference of the UCC and tell of the resolution of 2012 and 2014 regarding health, environmental and ethical concerns surrounding the entry into our food supply of genetically modified organisms, so I will add testimony that is distinctly personal.

But before I tell of my experience as a gardener, I must say how grateful I am for Pope Francis' words regarding the issue at hand. I took on the responsibility of Minister for the Care of Creation shortly before Pope Francis weighed in with his deeply felt and beautifully written encyclical urging Care for Our Common Home, and how glad I was to have his testimony. If I were not submitting this testimony under the wire of the timeline, I would quote for you his heartfelt and Biblically grounded reservations regarding the production and consumption of genetically modified organisms.. But I pray you have already heard his council and will take heed.

As a gardener I have experienced the loss of bees as year succeeds to year. At first I wasn't as aware as I should have been of the absence of honey bees. There were still a multitude of wild bees of many kinds pollinating my plants. Now even they must be threatened, for no longer is the tree by my garden abuzz with hum when I water or weed in the evening. This is an incalculable loss, as you already know, I am sure.

Is it the genetically modified corn of the farmer whose field abuts my garden that is responsible for the loss of bees? I only know it was responsible for the cross-fertilization of my crop of sweet corn last year, which ended up looking beautiful and tasting like "cow corn."

But it is the unknowns of what happens when our food stuff is "genetically modified" that makes it essential to require the labeling of genetically modified organisms in our children's foods. Therefore, I urge the Committee on Children to support Raised House Bill 5300. Thank you, sincerely,

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