

March 2, 2016

Dear members of the Committee on Children,

I am writing to urge you all to **support House Bill 5300**, “An Act Concerning the Use of Genetically Modified Organisms in Children’s Food.”

As the description states, the main focus of this bill is:

“AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISMS IN CHILDREN'S FOOD.

To require infant formula, baby food and children's foods that are produced partially or entirely with genetically engineered materials to be labelled as such.”

There will most likely be a number of individuals that will want to focus on the science of GMO’s (however there isn’t much research with statistical significance or long term findings to indicate the safety of such) and that is not the focus of this hearing anyway.

The issue at hand is to determine a requirement for these products to have a label that indicates these products have been produced with genetically engineered materials. **This would provide a consumer with the ability to make a choice for themselves based on the transparent information provided by the manufacturer.**

As a health coach and wellness practitioner working in the field for over 20 years, teaching how to read a food label is a basic and integral skill for an individual to take control of their health. Food labels have morphed over the years to include more detailed information so that an educated choice can be made. Restaurants also now include nutrient information for just such a reason as well.

This alone can be quite confusing to a consumer as contradicting information is constantly bombarding them. What was important to pay attention to one day in dietary theories is now no longer true and the public becomes more and more confused all the while contributing to the continual increase of chronic health conditions and a sicker society at large.

When it comes to the issue of GMO’s, many US manufacturers produce products that indicate GE ingredients and export to many of the 65 nations that currently regulate labeling (see attached label examples) and they willingly include it in the list of product ingredients. It would make one wonder why it became an issue in all these other countries and then regulations were enacted to protect their citizens? Why don’t we as American citizens have the same rights? Why can’t a parent choose what they feel is best for their child when it comes to food?

Many of these nations are now working towards banning GMO’s – especially with children. Taiwan recently banned GMO’s in school meals due to health concerns.

What do all these other countries know that Americans are not paying attention to?

Again, this is a request to simply label that ingredients have been genetically modified or engineered. It’s not a warning or cautionary label (such as on the bottle of RoundUp itself).

Food manufacturers now label for possible allergen exposure such as nuts & dairy, etc. That began most likely due to the increased number of individuals, particularly children, with severe allergic reactions to certain ingredients. We've changed as a society to accommodate this change in health conditions – ie – airlines no longer serve peanuts.

Over 90% of Americans believe genetically engineered foods should be labeled however there is still strong resistance from many in the agriculture and food manufacturing industry.

And yet, many food manufacturers are willingly indicating their products are non-GMO in order to meet those customer demands and increase their bottom line. This consumer demand is also evident in the growing natural/organic food sections of most supermarkets.

While there is a lack of evidence supporting the human safety of exposure to the herbicides and pesticides used with GMO's, there is much information from reputable medical organizations about the health effects of exposure to these ingredients – especially to babies, infants and young children whose immune systems are not fully developed and therefore more vulnerable:

“Children are at a higher risk for cancer and other adverse health effects from pesticide exposure”¹
President Cancer Panel, National Institute of Health

“Diet is an important source of exposure to pesticides”²
National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences

“There is a growing body of literature that suggests that pesticides may induce chronic health complications in children, including neurodevelopmental or behavioral problems, birth defects, asthma, and cancer.”³
—American Academy of Pediatrics

When we know better, we do better – similar to how cigarette marketing and labeling has changed over the years. Or how there are now laws requiring seat belts or the use of bike helmets.

How many children need to become ill and suffer due to a reaction in the food they are eating in order for our society to make a change or until there is more substantial science?

To confirm, this testimony is not to support or condone GMO's. This is not about banning the substances. I'm simply urging you to support this bill, HB 5300 that will require labeling on children's food and allow a consumer to choose what they feel is in the best interest of their child. **The right to be able to choose a food product with full transparency. The right for an individual to make a choice based on their personal beliefs and values.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Citations:

- 1) Lefalle LD Jr. and Krupke M (2009), "Reducing Environmental Cancer Risk: What We Can Do Now." President's Cancer Panel, National Institutes of Health. Accessed on December 5, 2012. Available online: http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/pcp/annualReports/pcp08-09rpt/PCP_Report_08-09_508.pdf
- 2) Ibid.
- 3) Roberts JR and Karr CJ (2012), "Pesticide Exposure in Children." Pediatrics 130(6): e1765-e1788. Accessed on January 9, 2013. Available online: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/6/e1765.full.html>.

Additional information:

"Protecting Children's Health"- www.cornucopia.org/organic/childrens-health-report.pdf

Poll Finds Americans Support GMO Food Labeling – www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/poll-finds-americans-support-gmo-food-labeling/

15 Health Problems Linked to Monsanto's Roundup – www.ecowatch.com/2015/01/23/health-problems-linked-to-Monsanto-roundup/

European Food Label examples:

