

HB 5300

An Act Concerning The Use of Genetically Modified Organisms in Children's Food

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Chairman, ConnFACT (CT Families Against Chemical Trespass)
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Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and Members of the Children's Committee,

My name is Christine O'Day. I am the Chairman of ConnFACT and a Certified Holistic Health Coach. ConnFACT, which stands for CT Families Against Chemical Trespass, evolved out of GMO Free CT which is the organization that led the grassroots movement for the passage of the very first GMO labeling law in the United States here in CT in 2013. Our non-profit organization consists of volunteers who are all CT residents and have worked tirelessly for years on this campaign to get GMOs labeled in our state. Currently, there are over 10,000 families statewide following and supporting our efforts. Every single day we are hearing from our supporters, especially mothers, who want to see GMOs labeled and, like us, cannot understand why it is taking so long and why it is so hard to get four simple words on a package that would convey transparency for the food we eat and feed our families. This is not about banning GMOs, it is about being honest and transparent with American citizens.

You have heard from us many times in the past about the concerns we have with GMOs including the increased usage of toxic herbicides sprayed on GMO crops, the lack of long-term testing, the self-regulation of the biotechnology industry, the incestuous revolving door at the FDA overseeing the policies for GMOs and the list goes on. I do not want take up your time today to review all of these issues. I would, however, like to update you on two relevant issues that have occurred over the past year:

- 1) In the Spring of 2015 the World Health Organization (International Agency for Research on cancer, which is an arm of the World Health Organization) designated the herbicide glyphosate, which is very widely used on GMO crops, as 'probably carcinogenic' to humans. (1) This is especially concerning for infants and young children as they are the ones most at risk from harmful toxins such as glyphosate.
- 2) Also, the FDA approved the very first genetically engineered animal, GE salmon, which is a cross between a salmon and an eel. Once again, the FDA is relying on safety and environmental assessments provided by the manufacturer benefiting from the sale of these GE salmon (AquaBounty Technologies).

I want to appeal to you that the time has finally come to take a stand for the rights of citizens in this state, to remove our trigger clause and label GMOs now before the federal government succeeds in pre-empting the rights of our state from providing transparency for its citizens. Polls consistently show over 90% of American citizens want to see GMOs labeled. (2) In 2013,

we decided that GMOs should be labeled. So let's implement CT's GMO labeling law immediately. Please support and pass HB 5300.

Thank you.

Christine O'Day
Chairman, ConnFACT
Certified Holistic Health Coach

- (1) <http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarcnews/pdf/MonographVolume112.pdf>
- (2) <http://www.justlabelit.org/right-to-know-center/polls-surveys/>