

Legislative Committee on Children
Public Hearing on Toxins Effecting Children
February 28, 2013
Testimony by Amanda J. Wendt

My name is Amanda Wendt and I am from Trumbull. I am here today to ask the Committee on Children to support Bill HB 6527 AN ACT CONCERNING GENETICALLY ENGINEERED BABY FOOD.

I am a mother to two young children, a small business owner and a member of the leadership council of GMO Free CT. I became aware of Genetically Modified Organisms in our food system just about two years ago. My oldest was five at the time and my youngest was one and half. Both of my children had been eating teething biscuits and other "toddler" type foods from all of the big name baby food companies. And while I was able to breastfeed both of my children, I did use formula to supplement. Without my knowledge I gave my children foods that I do not believe have been studied enough to prove they are safe for long-term human consumption. Both of my children dealt with gastrointestinal disorders when they transitioned from breast milk to "real baby food" and one child is still under a GI specialists' care today.

I am not a scientist, but I worked for a large Pharmaceutical company for five years. During that time I learned about the process of taking a drug from the lab to a doctor prescribing to the general public. On average that takes 10 years and 1000s of people in clinical trials. Many times once these drugs hit the market they end up receiving a black box warning or being pulled, because even after such a thorough testing period there are still health issues that affect the greater population.

I assumed that so called additives in our foods went through the same rigorous testing. But I was wrong. And as a parent, charged with feeding my family I was shocked to learn that these "GMO foods" were introduced into our food system with only ninety days of research conducted. That no outside research companies reviewed the data. That the FDA scientists disagreed on the safety of these foods and GMOs were still given the ok to enter the food system because they were deemed "generally recognized as safe."

A study¹ done in Quebec, Canada in 2011 showed that Bt toxin from Bt Corn – one of the most popular genetically modified seeds planted and used in our food system - was found in the blood of pregnant women and their fetuses. Not only are we subjecting our babies to this toxin while we are pregnant, but then we are giving it to them in our formula and foods.

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My cousins in England do not have to feed genetically engineered foods to their families. England is one of 62 countries that labels GMO foods. They have a choice at the supermarket. I do not.

Ultimately, what I am asking for is a choice. My job as a parent is to nurture my children to allow them to grow into healthy, intelligent, caring and creative individuals who will give back and be a part of our great society. And part of that job is feeding my children healthy food to allow them to grow. As a parent I have a right to know what I am feeding my children. Until further testing has been done, by outside third party research groups and not the companies holding the patents on the seeds, I do not believe that these foods have the right to be called "generally recognized as safe" and I do not trust the FDA to provide safe food for my children, and certainly not for babies.

And as the federal government seems incapable of protecting our children I implore the Connecticut General Assembly to step up and do the right thing. Please label baby food and formulas that have ingredients created from genetically modified organisms. Please give parents in Connecticut the Right to Know if it is GMO.

Thank you for your time.

Footnote:

¹ Maternal and fetal exposure to pesticides associate to genetically modified foods in Eastern Townships of Quebec Canada
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21338670>