

February 28, 2013

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF CT HB 6527, An Act Concerning Genetically Engineered Baby Food

Submitted by: Tara Cook-Littman, 160 Stella Lane, Fairfield, CT

My name is Tara Cook-Littman and I am a former NYC Prosecutor, a Certified Holistic Health Counselor, and I am one of the leaders of the Grass Roots Movement that is the heart and soul of the CT GMO Labeling movement. We have come together to demand our right to know what is in our food. Such a simple request - the right to know what is in our food so we can choose whether or not to feed our families GMOs. A right the citizens of 62 other countries, including all of Europe, Japan, China, New Zealand and Australia already enjoy. But not here in America where we are shopping totally blind.

Most importantly, I am a mother of three beautiful children under the age of 10. Having children who are passed the baby formula and baby food stage, I have the benefit of hindsight and I wonder – would I make the same choices about how I fed them when they were babies if I knew then what I know now. This begs the question, what do I know now that I did not know then?

I now know that GMOs were never tested or proven safe by our own government. I now know that animal studies have linked GMOs with serious health risks, including allergies, gastrointestinal disease, cancer, organ damage, and autoimmune diseases to name a few. I now know that all the promises made by the biotech industry about the reasons to use GMOs have proven false. I now know that the chemicals being sold and used in conjunction with GMOs are harmful to human and animal health, are destroying our environment and polluting our waters. I know now that our government is not protecting my children the way I had assumed they were. I now know that I would have fed my children differently if I had been given the information necessary in being able to choose for myself whether to feed my children baby food and baby formula that contained GMOs. I am devastated that I fed my babies GMOs.

No corporation has a right to decide what is best for my children. I am their mother and I am responsible for doing what is best for them. When it comes to my own children, there is nothing I can do to take back the damage that GMOs may have already done. My son has food allergies and my daughter had severe gastrointestinal problems that began the day I stopped nursing and put her on genetically engineered formula. But, for the sake of all those mothers wanting to make the best choices for their own children, and for the sake of all those children, please mandate the labeling of all baby food and baby formula containing GMOs.

In CT, we gain momentum and strength every day as more CT residents learn what GMOs are and become angered at how they have been kept in the dark. Do CT legislators want to be remembered as heroes who put the rights of it's citizens above corporate interests or as the legislators who allowed corporate interests to squash our right to know? The answer is yet to be seen, but either way rest assured, we will remember. Please support our right to know and vote yes on HB 6527. Thank you.