

KEY VOTE **ALERT!**



Congressional & Public Affairs
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
1615 H Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.
20062-2000

202/463-5600

February 27, 2006

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, urges you to support H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005. This legislation would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act by extending national uniformity to food safety and warning label laws. The Chamber also urges opposition to amendments that would subvert the purpose of the legislation.

With the enactment of H.R. 4167, national uniformity would be extended to one of the very few areas where it has been lacking: food safety and warning labeling. Meat and poultry regulations, nutritional labeling, and pesticide tolerance standards are all regulated at the federal level. Food safety and warning label requirements, on the other hand, have been governed by a "patchwork quilt" of state and local regulations. This collection of inconsistent requirements is burdensome for food businesses and confusing for consumers.

H.R. 4167 takes a commonsense, measured approach to achieving national uniformity for food safety and warning label requirements, striking an appropriate balance between national and state interests. The legislation provides ample time for review and harmonization of pre-existing state rules, and establishes procedures under which states can opt out of uniformity requirements. Furthermore, H.R. 4167 does not impact the states' inspection and enforcement authority over food safety and warning label requirements.

With the increase in new food sources from overseas, thousands of new products introduced each year by domestic manufacturers, and faster communications and transportation, the need for a national food safety system is greater today than it was even ten years ago. Consumers should not have to endure conflicting standards that declare an identical food product safe in Alabama, but hazardous in Florida. **The Chamber strongly urges you to extend national uniformity to food safety and warning label laws by voting yes on H.R. 4167 and no on any amendments. The Chamber may consider votes on, or in relation to, this issue in our annual *How They Voted* congressional scorecard.**

Sincerely,

R. Bruce Josten