

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 9, 2005

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Chamber Applauds Passage of the National Food Uniformity Act Bill Eliminates the Costly Patchwork Quilt of Differing State Laws

WASHINGTON, DC—The U.S. Chamber of Commerce today praised House passage of H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act of 2005, a bill that replaces a patchwork quilt of state regulations governing food safety and warning labels with a single, national standard.

“By establishing a single national system, Congress is giving consumers and businesses the clarity they need to determine what is safe, what is permissible, and what needs to be labeled,” said Bruce Josten, Chamber executive vice president for Government Affairs. “Food manufacturers and consumers have a right to expect that rational, scientifically based, consistent standards will apply nationwide; food cannot be considered safe in one state and unsafe in another.”

The bill requires that state and federal food safety laws must be substantially the same. The law would prohibit states from putting warnings on food labels that differ from those imposed at the federal level. 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 ever, according to the Chamber.

“Uniformity is already the standard for many food regulations—from nutrition labeling to meat and poultry requirements,” said Josten. “This bill is a commonsense approach to achieving national uniformity for food safety and warning label requirements. It strikes an appropriate balance between national and state interests and ensures that consumers receive consistent information about the food that they buy.”

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is the world’s largest business federation representing more than 3 million businesses and organizations of every size, sector and region.