

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

R. BRUCE JOSTEN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
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TO THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES SENATE:

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, strongly urges you to consider co-sponsoring S. 3128, the National Uniformity for Food Act, a similar version of which recently passed the House with strong bi-partisan support. This legislation would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act by extending national uniformity to food safety and warning label laws.

With the enactment of this legislation, 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.

The National Uniformity for Food Act 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 preexisting state rules, and establishes procedures under which states can opt out of uniformity requirements. Furthermore, this legislation 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 one state, but hazardous in another.

The Chamber strongly urges you to consider co-sponsoring S. 3128, the National Uniformity for Food Act, and looks forward to a hearing on this bill in the near future.

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten