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Congress Takes a Bite Out of Consumers' Food Safety Protections

Washington – Two leading consumer groups today criticized the House for approving a controversial bill that would wipe out at least 200 state laws without putting in place additional federal standards, with no hearings on the legislation in the eight years since it was first introduced.

“Despite the food industry’s rhetoric, this bill is a sweeping rollback of decades of state action to protect consumers,” said Susanna Montezemolo, Policy Analyst with Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of *Consumer Reports*. “It would reduce food safety protections to the lowest common denominator and make states jump through expensive bureaucratic hoops to enact future food safety protections.”

Chris Waldrop, Deputy Director of the Food Policy Institute at the Consumer Federation of America, said: “This bill guts existing laws designed to protect consumers and would enact the most sweeping overhaul of food safety laws in decades.” He added: “State action on food safety has led to consumer protections not covered by federal laws, such as the elimination of arsenic in drinking water.”

The two groups noted the bill’s mounting opposition, which includes 39 state Attorneys General, the Association of Food and Drug Officials, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture, and numerous consumer and environmental groups. “We are confident that opposition will only grow as this bill moves to the Senate. As more Americans learn about the impact of this radical bill, they will demand more – not fewer – protections, and urge the Senate to undo the damage the House did today.”