



Consumer Federation of America

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25, 2014

Contact: Chris Waldrop
202-797-8551

Statement of CFA's Chris Waldrop on the Pathogen Reduction and Testing Reform Act

In the 1990s, an *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak linked to Jack in the Box restaurants in the northwestern United States sickened over 700 people and killed 4 children. Following that outbreak, the U.S. government made the important decision that we as a nation should not tolerate *E. coli* in ground beef. As a result of that decision, ground beef could not be sold if it contained that pathogen and any contaminated ground beef that was sold would need to be recalled.

Later, in the wake of another large scale outbreak, this time for *Listeria*, the government made the decision that we should not tolerate *Listeria* in ready-to-eat food products like deli meats. If *Listeria* was found in those types of products, those products would need to be recalled.

Now we have another large scale outbreak – this time linked to antibiotic resistant *Salmonella* in raw poultry - that has sickened over 600 consumers. Yet this time, USDA is not taking the strong action necessary to say that *Salmonella* should not be in our poultry products.

Consumers are shocked to learn that it is currently perfectly legal for companies to sell meat and poultry that is contaminated with pathogens like *Salmonella* or *Campylobacter*. This is not a preventive approach to food safety. And this is something we should not tolerate.

The legislation introduced today by Congresswoman DeLauro and Congresswoman Slaughter would provide USDA with clear authority to keep dangerous pathogens out of our meat and poultry supply. This bill will protect consumers from contaminated meat and poultry and CFA looks forward to working with Congress to pass this important legislation.

#####

Consumer Federation of America is an association of nearly 280 non-profit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, education and advocacy.