



## Consumer Federation of America

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### **CFA Supports Efforts to Modernize Food Safety System**

Consumer Federation of America strongly supports the Safe Food Act, introduced today by Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Representative Rosa DeLauro (D-CT). This legislation would place the nation's food safety responsibilities under a single Administrator, who would be responsible for ensuring the safety of the entire food supply. The legislation would also modernize our nation's food safety laws, some of which date back to 1906.

"It's been one hundred years since our first food safety laws were enacted," said Chris Waldrop, Director of the Food Policy Institute at CFA. "It's time that we bring those laws up to speed."

The Safe Food Act would revise existing food safety statutes to allocate resources according to risk, provide authority to test for dangerous pathogens, authorize mandatory recalls, and penalize companies that knowingly sell dangerous food. The legislation would also create a single agency and assign responsibility to a single administrator responsible for all of the nation's food safety programs and for their budgets. Currently, food safety responsibilities are divided up among 15 agencies administering some 30 laws.

"No one is in charge of our food safety system," Waldrop said. "Consumers shouldn't have to rely on cooperation among the agencies when it comes to protecting our food."

The burden of foodborne illness on the public is huge. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that each year, 76 million Americans are sickened by foodborne illness, resulting in 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,000 deaths.

The Government Accountability Office, Congress' investigative arm, recently placed food safety on its high risk list. The GAO recognized the need to transform the federal food safety framework in order to protect the public health and reduce risks to the economy. CFA agrees that such a transformation is necessary and applauds Senator Durbin and Representative DeLauro for their efforts to modernize the food safety system in the U.S. CFA is eager to work with Congress to make an effective, efficient food safety program real.

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Consumer Federation of America is a non-profit association of over 300 organizations, with a combined membership of over 50 million Americans. CFA's Food Policy Institute was created in 1999 and engages in research, education and advocacy on food and agricultural policy, agricultural biotechnology, food safety and nutrition.