



Consumer Federation of America

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Contact: Chris Waldrop
202-797-8551

Senate Vote Offers Holiday Hope for Safer Food in the Coming Year

The U.S. Senate today approved S. 510, the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act by a vote of 73 to 25. Chris Waldrop, director of Consumer Federation of America's Food Policy Institute said, "Americans expect our food to be safe. We've been shocked over the past few years by a series of large outbreaks of foodborne illness caused by common food products such as spinach, green onions, peppers, peanut butter, cookie dough and eggs. The Senate's action moves the country toward a new food safety law designed to meet the challenges inherent in a modern, global food system.

"The new law requires a fundamental shift in the Food and Drug Administration's food safety program, emphasizing prevention instead of waiting until people become sick or die. The FDA Food Safety Modernization Act specifically directs the FDA to prevent foodborne illness and requires the agency, food processors and produce farmers to identify areas of risk and act to prevent contamination. It also requires the FDA to assure that imported food is as safe as domestically produced food.

"All of us at Consumer Federation of America appreciate the commitment of the Senate sponsors, Richard Durbin, Tom Harkin, Christopher Dodd, Michael Enzi, Judd Gregg and Richard Burr, and their colleagues on the HELP committee, to food safety and their willingness to engage in the long detailed bipartisan negotiations that enabled this legislation to pass the Senate. We thank Senate Majority Leader Reid for committing the floor time to get the bill passed."

"Food safety reform isn't finished yet," said Carol Tucker-Foreman, CFA's distinguished fellow in food policy. "Differences in the House and Senate bills have to be resolved quickly so a final bill can be sent to the President. Time is very short but it can be done. The bills have some differences in language and resources required but they share identical goals and framework.

"We know that members of the House of Representatives are committed to fixing our broken food safety system. They've invested years of research and hearings and they passed strong reform legislation 18 months ago. Now that the Senate has acted, we respectfully ask that leaders

of both parties in both houses, recognizing the great need for this legislation, and in the spirit of the season, agree to send a final bill to the President before the 111th Congress adjourns.

“We need Congress to end the food version of Russian Roulette that strains our faith in the commitment of both markets and government to meet their food safety responsibilities. Final congressional agreement and the President’s signature will go far toward sparing American families the personal and economic pain of foodborne illness and restoring confidence in our food system.”

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The Consumer Federation of America is an association of nearly 300 nonprofit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy and education.