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Food and Nutrition Legislation

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Since April 1, 1991, many bills affecting food and nutrition concerns have been introduced in the House and the Senate. Some of these bills are described below.

Food Safety and Quality

S. 1324, Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (OH)

This bill, the Poultry Consumer Protection Act of 1991, would amend the Public Health Service Act to require a study of the incidence of human infection resulting from the microbiological pathogenic contamination of food. The study would provide scientifically sound information regarding health risks to consumers resulting from such contamination. The bill would facilitate public and private disclosure of contamination information to maintain public health. It also would protect employees who report food safety violations.

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S. 1353, Sen. Joseph Lieberman (CT)

The Pesticide, Health and Safety Act of 1991 would amend the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act provisions on the registration, reregistration, cancellation, suspension, and registration's expiration of pesticides. The act would ensure that hazardous pesticides are promptly removed from the market and that the health of all citizens, particularly children, is protected. The bill would also re-

quire that a pediatrician and public health scientist be included on the Scientific Advisory Panel.

H.R. 2058, Rep. James Hansen (UT)

This bill would amend the Import Milk Act to require any dairy product imports to meet applicable U.S. domestic standards of quality, residue levels, packaging, and processing facilities. The Secretary of Health and Human Services would be directed to establish standards for an imported dairy product when the application of existing domestic standards is not practicable. The bill would also prohibit imports of a dairy product that does not meet such standards.

H.R. 2397, Rep. Scott Klug (WI)

This bill, the Milk Nutrition and Labeling Act, would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require fluid milk labels to indicate the nonfat content of the milk and to prominently display the protein content of the milk. Under these regulations, skim milk would have to contain at least 9 percent milk solids not fat; lowfat milk, at least 10 percent; and whole milk, at least 8.7 percent.

S. 1110, Sen. Robert Kasten, Jr. (WI)

The Healthier Milk Act would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to develop milk standards that require whole milk to contain at least 3.25 percent milk-fat and 8.7 percent milk solids not fat. Lowfat milk would have to contain at least 10 percent milk solids not fat; and skim milk would have to contain at least 9 percent milk solids not fat.

S. 898, Sen. Patrick Leahy (VT) and H.R. 2083, Rep. Mike Synar (OK)

Among other provisions, the Circle of Poison Prevention Act of 1991 would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to require the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency to revoke any tolerance or exemption that permits the presence of a pesticide on food if that pesticide has been canceled or modified to prohibit its use on food. If a residue of a canceled or suspended pesticide will persist in the environment and may be present on food, a tolerance may be established that will permit the residue, but the tolerance level must protect public health. The bill would prohibit the importation of a raw agricultural commodity (including fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, and eggs), unless the importer files a document identifying each chemical used in production. Agricultural attaches would have to annually report on the customary use of pesticides on food produced in foreign countries.

H.R. 1662, Rep. John Moakley (MA)

The Nutrition Advertising Coordination Act of 1991 would amend the Federal Trade Commission Act to require food advertising to meet the same requirements regulating nutritional labeling of food. Under

this bill, a food advertisement could not characterize the level of any nutrient, the relationship of any nutrient to a disease or a health-related condition, or a serving size or portion unless these conformed with the nutrition labeling regulations. A food advertisement would be considered misleading unless it discloses the level of fat or saturated fat when a cholesterol claim is made, unless it mentions the level of cholesterol when a saturated fat claim is made, and unless it states the level of total fat if a claim of "high in dietary fiber" is made.

H.R. 1644, Rep. Leon Panetta (CA)

This bill would amend the Walsh-Healey Act, which legislates Government contracts, to cover contracts for processed foods. The bill would require that companies both in and outside the United States comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 to be eligible for Government contracts.

S. 828, Sen. Thomas Daschle (SD)

This bill would amend the Federal Meat Inspection Act and the Poultry Inspection Act to require imports of meat and poultry products to be subject to the same inspection, sanitary, quality, species verification, and residue standards as products produced in the United States. The bill also would require imports to be inspected by U.S. inspectors.

S. 1074, Sen. Edward Kennedy (MA) and

H.R. 2342, Rep. Henry Waxman (CA)

The Safety of Pesticides in Food Act of 1991 would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act

to give additional authority to the Environmental Protection Agency to regulate pesticide chemical residue tolerances. The bill would establish risk-based food safety standards consistent with other food regulatory procedures by eliminating economic benefits from consideration of whether a pesticide is safe for use on food. A standard of "negligible risk" of causing adverse human health effects would be defined. Then, all pesticides and chemicals used on food products must be found in quantities with less than a negligible risk. The bill would establish a mechanism to calculate "negligible risk" for children from infants to adolescents, taking into account their unique physiologies, limited diets, and low body weights. New and old pesticides would be required to meet the same standards.

Food Assistance

S. 757, Sen. Patrick Leahy (VT)

The Mickey Leland Childhood Hunger Relief Act would amend the Food Stamp Act of 1977 to: (1) ensure adequate food assistance, (2) promote self-sufficiency, and (3) simplify the provision of food assistance. Establishing transitional caps on benefits through fiscal 1995, the bill would remove the current cap on the "excess shelter" deduction for determining eligibility in the Food Stamp Program. The Secretary of Agriculture would be required to increase basic benefits at the beginning of each fiscal year, until they reached 105 percent of the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan.

The bill would promote self-sufficiency by allowing households to receive some child support without penalizing benefits. That is, the

first \$50 in monthly child support payments to nonhousehold members would be excluded from consideration as program income. The limit on the fair market value of vehicles that program recipients may own would increase annually. The bill also would increase dependent care deductions and participant and State agency reimbursements for employment and training activities. The bill would simplify the provision of assistance by permitting related adults living in the same household to apply for separate program benefits under specified conditions. A participating family made up of or including an elderly or disabled member would be permitted to own \$300 in allowable financial resources.

S. 973, Sen. Brock Adams (WA) and H.R. 1737, Rep. Marilyn Lloyd (TN)

The School Based Meals for Older Individuals and Intergenerational Programs Act of 1991 would amend the Older Americans Act of 1965 to establish a program to provide meals for older individuals volunteering in school-based programs. The bill would also establish activities for older volunteers to interact with elementary and secondary school students. The Commissioner on Aging would be directed to make grants to States for the establishment and operation of projects that: (1) are carried out in elementary and secondary schools; (2) provide hot meals to older volunteers while schools are in session, during the summer, and (unless waived by the State) on weekdays in the school year when the schools are not in session; (3) provide intergenerational activities in which older volunteers and students interact; (4) provide social and recreational activities for older individuals; (5) develop "skill-banks" that maintain and make

available to school officials information on the skills and preferred activities of older volunteers, so that they may serve as tutors, teacher aides, living historians, special speakers, playground supervisors, lunchroom assistants, and in other roles; and (6) provide opportunities for older volunteers to participate in school activities and use school facilities.

H.R. 1460, Rep. Jim Moody (WI)

The Food for Young Children Act would amend the National School Lunch Act to make a private organization providing non-residential daycare services eligible for aid under the Child Care Food Program, if at least 25 percent of the children it serves are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.

H.R. 1714, Rep. James Traficant, Jr. (OH)

This bill would amend the National School Lunch Act to include children aged 13 to 15 in the Child Care Food Program.

H.R. 2258, Rep. Tony Hall (OH) and Rep. Bill Emerson (MO)

This extensive legislation, Freedom From Want Act, was introduced to help end hunger and human want. Notable provisions include increasing participation in the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Head Start Program.

The bill also would provide for a food retailing development program. Under this program, the Secretary of Agriculture could provide grants for up to 20 nonprofit, community-based organizations to carry out food retailing development projects. The projects would

be funded to: (1) increase the access of individuals residing in communities underserved by supermarkets to more affordable and high quality food, and (2) strengthen the operation of existing retail food stores in underserved communities.

Policymakers have not adopted a standard definition of chronic hunger conditions in the United States, nor a formula for quantifying hunger problems. This bill defines hunger issues within the context of food security, which allows policymakers to more accurately describe and address hunger issues.

Competitive grants would be provided to seven land-grant colleges and universities to establish regional centers for community food security. The grants will be used to: (1) obtain from local communities information necessary or useful for developing methods for monitoring food security conditions, (2) assist local community agencies and groups in developing information management systems, (3) develop techniques and methods for monitoring local food security conditions, (4) coordinate the dissemination of food security information, and (5) analyze and disseminate information about food security from local sources to Federal, State, and local governments.

H.R. 2576, Rep. Jim Moody (WI)

The Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Act of 1991 would amend the Emergency Food Assistance Act of 1983 to authorize additional appropriations for fiscal years 1992-96 for the purchase, processing, and distribution of milk to eligible recipient agencies that provide needy persons with nutritional assistance during times of emergency and distress. ■