

milestone and I wish the corporation, and the Boyd family the best on all future endeavors.

SAFE FOOD ACT OF 2015

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the issue that impacts the lives of every American—food safety.

In 1997, I introduced a bill to consolidate at one agency the Federal oversight of food safety, and I have introduced that bill seven times, including most recently just last week. So I found it heartening to see the President's proposal to consolidate most of those responsibilities into one agency as part of the fiscal year 2016 budget.

Today, 15 different Federal agencies have food safety responsibilities. This patchwork of oversight makes it harder to focus on the highest risks in our food system and makes foodborne illness outbreaks more difficult to manage. President Obama's budget puts in motion a plan to create the efficiencies we have been talking about since 1997.

The President's plan would create a single new agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. That agency would have primary responsibility for food safety inspections, as well as enforcement, applied research, and outbreak response and mitigation. And the proposed agency would be the Federal point for coordinating with State and local entities and food safety stakeholders. This is an important step toward creating a single food agency.

I first got involved in updating our food safety system in response to a letter from constituent. The letter shared the story of a mother purchasing, cooking, and serving her 6-year-old son a hamburger. Very few foods are more basic in American than hamburger, but on this day that hamburger was contaminated with *E. coli*. This simple hamburger ended up taking her son's life. This story, as sad as it is, is only one of many. Each year, 48 million Americans become sick as a result of foodborne illnesses. That is one in every six people. Mr. President, 128,000 of those will be so sick they will need hospitalization, and 3,000 of those will not survive their illnesses.

While we have made significant reforms to our food safety system with passage of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act—which will improve our food safety—we have still not solved this problem.

Recently, the New Yorker ran an article called "A Bug in the System." The story details the experience of Rick Schiller, who had contracted a form of the salmonella bacterium, known as Salmonella Heidelberg. The condition led to multiple days in the hospital. After his release, he was contacted by the Centers for Disease Control, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture collected some chicken from his freezer as a potential source for the foodborne illness. More than a year

later, he had not heard back from the investigator and he still wasn't sure that it was the chicken that almost killed him.

This New Yorker article highlights problems that have been identified by the Government Accountability Office, the National Research Council, and the Institute of Medicine for decades. Simply determining which of 15 Federal agencies is responsible for inspection of a particular food can leave the average citizen scratching their head.

In the current regulatory regime, a pepperoni pizza—because it contains meat—has ingredients that will be inspected three times before the product hits the grocery store freezer. A vegetarian pizza produced at the same facility, however, will probably not undergo any inspection.

For eggs, it is even more scrambled. If it is a fresh egg, it is inspected by U.S. Department of Agriculture. But if that egg is part of premade product like a breakfast biscuit, it is the Food and Drug Administration. It just does not make sense. The experts said it, the data reflects it, and we can be left with only one conclusion.

The fragmented nature of our food safety system has left us more vulnerable to risk of foodborne illness and too often forced consumers to go it alone in the case of outbreak. I agree with the President that it is time for a new governmentwide approach. I would like to take it a step further and establish a single food safety agency.

The Safe Food Act I introduced last week would transfer and consolidate food safety authorities for inspections, enforcement, labeling, and research into a single food safety agency. That will allow us to prioritize system-wide food safety goals and targets. With a single food safety agency, food producers and manufacturers will just have a single Federal regulatory structure.

An egg is an egg is an egg and will be regulated by the same agency regardless of how you cook, process, or serve it. This should make it easier for those in the food industry to comply with food safety laws, even if those laws are no less stringent. The bill also modernizes certain aspects of our federal food safety laws to protect and improve public health.

Specifically, the bill would authorize mandatory recall for all foods. Today, it is easier to recall toys than tainted meat. The bill requires facilities to use risk-based analysis to identify and protect against potential hazards at their facility. The bill will authorize performance standards for pathogens like salmonella and campylobacter and for the first time authorize the agency to prevent products that are not meeting those standards from entering the market. The bill will provide for full traceback of foods to better identify and stop the outbreak at its source. Finally, the bill provides a single point of contact for families harmed by foodborne illness to turn to for answers.

This new agency will help those families navigate the differing Federal, State, and local food safety agencies to get the answers they deserve. It is bad enough to suffer severe illness or lose a loved one to foodborne illness; you should not have to spend months going from agency to agency trying to get as simple an answer to a question like, Did this chicken make me sick?

This is not the only approach to creating an agency with the primary responsibilities for overseeing and directing food safety, but we think it will help close existing gaps in our food safety system, reduce the likelihood of foodborne illness, clarify our inspection regimes for industry, and provide more clear assistance to people made sick by foodborne illness.

In closing, I want to take a moment to thank some of my colleagues. I would like to thank Senators FEINSTEIN, BLUMENTHAL, and GILLIBRAND for joining me in introducing this bill, and I stand ready to work with any Member on either side of the aisle who wants to tackle this issue.

I commend the administration for embracing this idea of consolidating oversight of food safety. I hope it doesn't take another serious foodborne outbreak before we decide to act.

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF LINCOLN COLLEGE

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I rise to honor the 150th anniversary for Lincoln College in Lincoln, IL. One hundred fifty years ago tomorrow, the Illinois General Assembly granted a charter establishing the new college, originally known as Lincoln University. Just 6 days later, on President Abraham Lincoln's 56th birthday, ground was broken for University Hall, a building still in use today. Lincoln University was the first institution to be named for Abraham Lincoln and the only during his lifetime. The first commencement in 1868 included a total of three students—two men and one woman. Lincoln College has come a long way.

This year, Lincoln College enrolled about 640 students, and 90 percent of those who graduate will continue their education at a 4-year university. Lincoln College now has campuses in Lincoln and Normal, IL, with a tradition of personal education. By providing a low faculty to student ratio, Lincoln College offers individualized attention that makes the difference between failure and success for many students. The school provides a springboard for students who go on to continue their education and helps students find good paying jobs.

Lincoln College offers more than just great student services and academic programs that are second to none. Lincoln College fields a number of varsity sports teams that have won national championships, hosts a speaker series, and maintains Civil War era artifacts at the Lincoln Heritage Museum.