

I applaud Community Alternatives Kentucky, particularly their wonderful support staff, for all that they do to assist disabled individuals and their families. On behalf of so many in Kentucky's Second Congressional District, I would like to express my profound appreciation for their service and for the many contributions to our communities from the people they serve. Together, they are a true inspiration to us all.

It is my great privilege to recognize Community Alternatives Kentucky today, before the entire U.S. House of Representatives, for their achievements as advocates for disabled citizens. Their unique compassion and dedication to the happiness and well-being of all people make them outstanding citizens worthy of our collective honor and respect.

HONORING OFFICER SCOTT SEVERNS

HON. CHRIS CHOCOLA

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2006

Mr. CHOCOLA. Mr. Speaker, today I rise with a solemn heart to honor a hero. On April 21, 2006 Cpl. Scott Severns of the South Bend Police Department was shot during an attempted robbery. He succumbed to his wounds and passed early the next morning.

I have heard it said that at times like these, we should not focus on how someone dies, but on how they lived, but how Cpl. Severns died was a testament to how he lived. When two would-be robbers approached Cpl. Severns and a female companion, brandished a gun, and threatened them, Cpl. Severns instinctively stepped in between the gunman and his friend. Character like this cannot be taught through a police academy course, and it is not issued to every officer after their swearing in. This type of valor can only come from an individual with the heart of a hero.

We oftentimes do not take enough time to appreciate the sacrifice that law enforcement officers make every single day so that we can live in safety. It is easy for us to go about our daily lives without a thought about those that stand in between us and those that would try to hurt us.

Cpl. Severns's sacrifices from the moment he first put on his uniform, until his tragic, premature end, exemplify the best of American law enforcement.

Mr. Speaker, we would be remiss if we did not take this time to honor his service, remember his sacrifice, and mourn his passing.

INTRODUCTION OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 2, 2006

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of six bills I introduced today that will provide a comprehensive regulatory framework for all genetically engineered plants, animals, bacteria, and other organisms. The bills will protect our food, environment, and health. They are a common sense precaution to ensure genetically engineered foods do no harm.

Genetic engineering is having a serious impact on the food we eat, on the environment, and on farmers. To ensure we can maximize benefits and minimize hazards, Congress must provide a comprehensive regulatory framework for all genetically engineered products.

Current laws, such as our food safety and environmental laws, were not written with this technology in mind. Clearer laws are necessary to ensure that these new scientific capabilities and the associated impacts are closely monitored.

The six bills include the Genetically Engineered Food Right to Know Act of 2006, which requires food companies to label all foods that contain or are produced with genetically engineered materials and instructs the Food and Drug Administration to conduct periodic tests to ensure compliance. This is a basic consumer rights and consumer safety issue. People have a right to know what is in the food they are eating, and that the food is safe.

Combined, these bills would ensure that consumers are protected, increase food safety, protect farmers rights, make biotech companies liable for their products, and help developing nations resolve hunger concerns

SUMMARY OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD LEGISLATION

THE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD RIGHT TO KNOW ACT

Consumers wish to know whether the food they purchase and consume is a genetically engineered food. Concerns include the potential transfer of allergens into food and other health risks, potential environmental risks associated with the genetic engineering of crops, and religiously and ethically based dietary restrictions. Adoption and implementation of mandatory labeling requirements for genetically engineered food produced in the United States would facilitate international trade. It would allow American farmers and companies to export and appropriately market their products—both genetically engineered and non-genetically engineered—to foreign customers. This bill acknowledges consumers have a right to know what genetically engineered foods they are eating:

Requires food companies to label all foods that contain or are produced with genetically engineered material and requires the FDA to periodically test products to ensure compliance.

Voluntary, non-GE food labels are authorized.

A legal framework is established to ensure the accuracy of labeling without creating significant economic hardship on the food production system.

THE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOOD SAFETY ACT

Given the consensus among the scientific community that genetic engineering can potentially introduce hazards, such as allergens or toxins, genetically engineered foods need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and cannot be presumed to be generally recognized as safe. The possibility of such hazards dictates a cautious approach to genetically engineered food approvals. However, FDA has glossed over the food safety concerns of genetically engineered foods and not taken steps to ensure the safety of these genetically engineered foods. This bill requires that all genetically engineered foods follow a strenuous food safety review process:

Requires FDA to screen all genetically engineered foods through the current food additive process to ensure they are safe for

human consumption, yet continues FDA discretion in applying the safety factors that are generally recognized as appropriate.

Requires that unique concerns be explicitly examined in the review process, a phase out of antibiotic resistance markers, and a prohibition on known allergens.

Requires the FDA to conduct a public comment period of at least 30 days

THE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED CROP AND ANIMAL FARMER PROTECTION ACT

Agribusiness and biotechnology companies have rapidly consolidated market power at the same time as the average farmer's profits and viability have significantly declined. Policies promoted by biotech corporations have systematically acted to remove basic farmer rights enjoyed since the beginning of agriculture. These policies include unreasonable seed contracts, the intrusion into everyday farm operations, and liability burdens. The introduction of genetically engineered crops has also created obstacles for farmers, including the loss of markets and increased liability concerns. To mitigate the abuses upon farmers, a clear set of farmer rights must be established. This bill provides several farmer rights and protections to maintain the opportunity to farm:

Farmers may save seeds and seek compensation for failed genetically engineered crops.

Biotech companies may not: shift liability to farmers; nor require access to farmer's property; nor mandate arbitration; nor mandate court of jurisdiction; nor require damages beyond actual fees; nor charge more to American farmers for use of this technology, than they charge farmers in other nations, or any other unfair condition.

Seed companies must: ensure seeds labeled non-GE are accurate; provide clear instructions to reduce cross-pollination, which contaminates other fields; and inform farmers of the risks of using genetically engineered crops.

The EPA is required to evaluate the concern of Bt resistant pests and take actions necessary to prevent resistance to Bt, an important organic pesticide.

The bill prohibits genetic engineering designed to produce sterile seeds and loan discrimination based on the choice of seeds an agricultural producer uses.

THE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED ORGANISM LIABILITY ACT

Biotech companies are selling a technology that is being commercialized far in advance of the new and unknown science of genetic engineering. Farmers may suffer from crop failures, neighboring farmers may suffer from cross pollination, increased insect resistance, and unwanted "volunteer" genetically engineered plants, and consumers may suffer from health and environmental impacts. Therefore, biotech companies should be found liable for the failures of genetically engineered crops. This bill ensures that the creator of the technology assumes all liability:

The bill places all liability from negative impacts of genetically engineered organisms squarely upon the biotechnology companies that created the genetically engineered organism.

Farmers are granted indemnification to protect them from the liabilities of biotech companies.

The bill prohibits any transfer of liability away from the biotechnology companies that created the genetically engineered organism.

REAL SOLUTIONS TO WORLD HUNGER ACT

The demand for mandatory labeling, safety testing, and farmer protections do not constitute obstacles to the cessation of world hunger. Economics remain the significant