

January 14, 2010

Dear Senator,

One year ago, our lives were changed when *Salmonella*-contaminated peanut products were implicated in a major, multi-state foodborne-illness outbreak -- an outbreak that occurred as a result of outdated and ineffective regulation and oversight by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In the end, close to 3,900 products containing peanuts or peanut paste were recalled, including cookies, crackers, cereal, candy, and ice cream.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), peanut butter and peanut paste from the Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) contaminated with *Salmonella* Typhimurium caused a known nine deaths and over 700 illnesses in 46 states (with many more cases never reported to CDC). Some of us lost our mother, father, or another close relative; others of us had children or other family members who fell ill, or we were sickened ourselves. Outraged congressional lawmakers convened hearings, during which they promised to implement meaningful food-safety reforms.

Now, one year later, we are still waiting for Congress to enact FDA food-safety legislation containing the types of provisions that would have prevented the PCA outbreak. President Barack Obama and leaders from both parties in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate have called for action, and according to a poll commissioned by The Pew Charitable Trusts, nine out of 10 Americans favor legislation to strengthen our food-safety laws.

Food-safety legislation currently being considered would be the first major overhaul of the FDA's food-safety authorities in decades. The bills, which would establish minimum inspection frequencies, require that food processors establish food-safety plans, and grant FDA mandatory recall authority, would shift FDA's regulatory approach from reaction to prevention.

Had these provisions been in place before the PCA outbreak, the company would have been required to develop a food-safety plan, which would have identified the points in the process where contamination could occur and what steps it was taking to minimize it. Moreover, FDA would have been inspecting the plant on a regular basis and, once a problem was discovered, it could have immediately required a recall, rather than rely on voluntary action.

The House passed a strong food-safety bill (H.R. 2749) last July by a wide majority and to great acclaim from both parties. Consumer, public health, and victim advocacy groups, as well as food industry trade associations, strongly supported the bill.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee approved a bipartisan bill (S. 510) in November 2009. We are writing now to urge you to contact Senate leadership and ask that S. 510 be scheduled for a floor vote, finalized by a conference committee, and presented to President Obama for signature before Valentine's Day, February 14th.

Strong, comprehensive FDA food-safety reform legislation must be passed soon before more families have to experience the pain and suffering we have from deadly and debilitating foodborne illnesses -- illnesses that could be prevented by measures included in S. 510. Please urge prompt passage of S.510 and let's prevent any more outbreaks.

Family of Ashley Marie Allbrook
Mikel & Brenda Allbrook
Colorado Springs, CO

Family of Shirley Almer † *
Savage, MN

Family of Karen Ann Andrew
Karen & Larry Andrew
Roseberg, OR

Family of Stephanie Amanda Bielen
Brian & Jennifer Bielen
Great Meadow, NJ

Family of Minnie C. Borden †
Ernest & Earlene Carter
Chicago, IL

Charles E. Cantwell
Eagle, ID

Family of Christine Marie Chandler
Tony & Maura Chandler
Clermont, FL

Carolyn A. Hayes Dawson
Haltom City, TX

Hillary Marin Fiske
Hartford, NY

Family of Mario Manuel Gonzalez
Mario Manuel & Amy Lou Gonzalez
Mentone, CA

Family of Allison Rose Hamilton
Paul & Connie Hamilton
Caledonia, MI

Todd Christopher Harps
Seattle, WA

Family of Emma Clair Hicks
Greg & Rachael Hicks
Las Vegas, NV

Family of Jacob Michael Hurley
Peter & Brandy Hurley
Wilsonville, OR

Family of Paige Alexis Illiano
Andrew & Ulana Illiano
Mineola, NY

Family of Eliana Antonia McWilliams
Wilfred & Elizabeth McWilliams
Southaven, MS

Family of Christopher Michael Meunier
Daryl & Gabrielle Meunier
South Burlington, VT

Tammy J. Morrill
Winthrop ME

Family of Nellie Napier † **
Medina, OH

Kimberley Gwynn Richardson
Lake Havasu City, AZ

Family of Gavin Leeland-Miller
Salitore
Michael & Monica Salitore
Gresham, OR

Inez "Jean" Seals
Cookeville, TN

Family of Jacob & Samantha Shockey
Vernon & Sheila Shockey
Bonney Lake, WA

Family of Makayla Jacqueline
Stephens
Mike & Jill Summers
Quapaw, OK

Family of Katherine Reese Sullivan
Willis & Amanda Sullivan
Leland, NC

Family of Clifford Frederick
Tousignant †
Louis Tousignant
Minneapolis, MN

Mildred L. Williams
Raynham, MA

† Deceased

* The family of Shirley Almer includes: Mary Barden and Suzanne Barden both of Phoenix, Arizona; Virginia Lorentz of Brainerd, Minnesota; Victoria Hammes of Oakdale, Minnesota;, Michael Almer and Patrick Almer, both of Pernham, Minnesota; and Jeff Almer of Savage, Minnesota.

** The family of Nellie Napier includes: Charley & Carol Adkins of Chester, Maryland; Herb & Ruth Napier of Chippewa Lake, Ohio; Glenn Adkins and Billy Reed, both of Doylestown, Ohio; Steve Collins, Abigail & John Correll, and Benny & Judy Napier, all of Lodi, Ohio; Larry & Lori Adkins of Marshallville, Ohio; Crystal Collins, Aaron Napier, Adam Napier, Alan Napier, Eric Napier, Dave & Paula Napier, Randy & Laurie Napier, and Megan & Mike Warner, all of Medina, Ohio; Tricia Adkins of Portsmouth, Ohio; Glen & Maryann Adkins, Reba Adkins, Scott & Debbie Adkins and Jeff & Bonnie Napier, all of Rittman, Ohio; Hester Blake, Kathy & Don Hogston and Amy & Bryan Shamp, all of Wadsworth, Ohio; Stephanie & Aaron Teal of West Salem, Ohio; and Pamela Ghent of Kenova, West Virginia.