

Bill Seeking to Ban GMO Labeling, Fails in US Senate



By Lila Abassi — March 17, 2016



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In what appears to be one of the most heated topics regarding food, on Wednesday the United States Senate voted no (48-49) on the [Roberts' Bill](#) [2], falling shy of the 60 votes needed to pass.

Had the federal legislation succeeded, individual states would have been banned from requiring GMO food producers to label their products. As a result, mandatory GMO labeling can go forward, as it will in Vermont beginning on July 1.

Besides having [zero scientific](#) [3] evidence that GMOs have posed any risk anywhere to anyone, these groups that demand more government regulation in the end hurt more people than they help. Activist groups, are comprised of well-funded organic and natural food groups – which don't take into account that the burden of cost in requiring companies to label their products will ultimately be passed onto the consumer.

It is estimated that this would cost the average American family an additional \$1,000 per year in groceries. While these activists take their reusable bags to pay \$20 for kale chips and not bat an eyelash, can take comfort that their efforts have just hurt plenty of struggling families.

[Henry Miller](#) [4], writing on Forbes.com, very astutely points out that in Europe retailers and food processors have avoided products using a GM label, and that has taken the choice away from consumers of having the option of buying GM products which are much cheaper.

In a world where the human population is expected to reach 9.6 billion, according to Pew Research Center projections, and with the limited supply of land to be farmed, agri-technology is helping to create crops that can endure conditions such less water and harsher climates. Someone has to feed these people and GM technology is not only sustainable, but the only feasible way to keep up with the global population.

Are these activists even aware that key [medications](#) [5] are products of genetic engineering?

Insulin, for example, once derived from pigs caused the body to reject the foreign insulin in some or other created systemic reactions, now comes from modified bacteria. In fact, there is no

difference between endogenously produced insulin and the recombinant insulin derived from bacteria in a lab. The same goes for growth hormone, which used to come from cadavers. From vaccine delivery via bananas to targeted therapies that cause less side effects, all these would not be feasible without genetically modified organisms.

In a random sample of the population, it would be interesting to see how many people are aware of what GMOs are and how it affects them. Anti-GMO activists hide behind a guise of “natural” and “sustainable.” In reality, they are something much more pernicious. They feed off people’s fears and end up causing more trouble – a perfect example would be the anti-vaccine movement – which has created vaccine-preventable diseases to crop up where they were almost eradicated.

We are headed down a dangerous path if we let anti-science hucksters have their way in the political arena because they have the very real potential of causing much harm.

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[1] <http://www.shutterstock.com>

[2] <http://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2016/03/16/470677241/bill-that-would-block-states-from-mandating-gmo-labels-stalls-in-senate>

[3] <http://acsh.org/news/2015/07/27/why-gmo-labeling-is-confusing-misleading-and-ultimately-pointless/>

[4] <http://www.forbes.com/sites/henrymiller/2015/10/28/a-genetically-modified-label-costs-way-more-than-you-think/#91212df7ae38>

[5] <http://www.nature.com/scitable/topicpage/genetically-modified-organisms-gmos-transgenic-crops-and-732>