

Mrs. LOWEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of S. 741, the Minor Use and Minor Species Animal Health Act of 2004. The bill, known as MUMS, will make an important contribution to animal health.

This legislation is very similar to H.R. 2079 sponsored by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. JOHN) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. PICKERING); and although we are taking up the Senate bill, they, along with my colleague, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), deserve credit for leadership on this issue.

The bill is supported by the MUMS Coalition and the Keep Antibiotics Working Coalition. The MUMS coalition includes the American Farm Bureau Federation, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the Animal Health Institute, the National Fisheries Institute, and many other organizations. The Keep Antibiotics Working Coalition includes the Union of Concerned Scientists, Environmental Defense, and the Center For Science in the Public Interest. In sum, the proverbial delicate balance has been found.

Mr. Speaker, I am also greatly pleased that MUMS includes the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act, Title II of S. 741. I authored the food allergy bill 4 years ago; and since the bill's inception, everyone, from food-allergic consumers to members of the food industry, has rallied behind the bill.

However, we would not be here today without the backing of the gentleman from Michigan (Ranking Member DINGELL), the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BARTON), the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. BROWN), Secretary Thompson, and Commissioner Crawford. I am truly grateful to them for their involvement and support.

I also owe the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) and Senators KENNEDY and GREGG special thanks for being my partners in this effort. We spent a few years and many hours hashing out the bill before us, committed to crafting a noncontroversial, bipartisan product. And I believe we accomplished our goal.

Yesterday, I was surprised to learn that my good friend, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD), will be retiring at the end of the year. While I am disappointed to be losing such a tremendous colleague, one I have worked with on so many issues of importance for so many years, I know that the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. GREENWOOD) will continue to lead

and be a strong advocate for great causes. Good luck in all your future endeavors. And please know, Jim, that your fair, bipartisan manner will be missed.

Mr. Speaker, the 11 million Americans with food allergies face a daily struggle. Because there is no cure for allergies, the only way to stay healthy is to avoid certain foods. But maintaining an allergen-free diet is incredibly difficult. Food ingredient statements use scientific jargon commonly used by only those wearing lab coats, not average citizens.

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Take, for example, a recent study which found that fewer than one in ten parents restricting milk from their allergic children's diet were actually able to correctly recognize terms for milk on a label. Statistics like this make you think if adults cannot easily determine terms like whey, casein, lactose, how can you expect food-allergic children to remember so many complicated terms? The answer is, we cannot and we should not.

Today up to 200 allergic reactions to foods result in death each year, and 30,000 require life-saving emergency treatments. Moreover, within just the last five years, the number of children with a peanut allergy has doubled. If we do not take action to improve food labels, the number of deaths and incidents will rise.

Navigating insufficient labels is much more than an irritation for the millions with food allergies. It is a matter of life and death. Unfortunately, the situation is the same for those with celiac disease, a lifelong digestive disorder that damages the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. Although celiac sufferers do not go into anaphylactic shock if they consume gluten, the consequences of leaving the disease undiagnosed or untreated can be just as grave and deadly, potentially leading to additional autoimmune disorders, infertility, osteoporosis or cancer.

With no treatment for this disease, the only alternative is to follow a strict gluten-free diet, which means not eating wheat, rye or barley. However, it is a regimen difficult to adhere to, because food ingredient statements are written more for scientists than consumers.

The bill before us provides a common-sense solution for those with food allergies and celiac disease. It will require that food ingredient statements list in everyday language the eight major food allergens: milk, egg, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, crustacean shellfish, soy and wheat. It will also give those with celiac disease the green light to consume foods without hesitation by establishing and setting guidelines for the use of the term "gluten-free."

Simply put, the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act requires minimal but life-saving changes to food ingredient statements. Upon its implementation, millions of Americans will finally be able to let out a collective sigh of relief, something we can all be proud of.

Before I close, I hope the Speaker and my colleagues will indulge me for just a moment. This bill has been a work in progress for 4-plus years. There are many people who worked diligently behind the scenes to craft it and secure its implementation. I would be remiss if I did not personally thank some key staffers, including John Ford, Ed Walz, Ryan Long, Alan Eisenberg, David Dorsey and Kate Winkler.

Additionally, we would not be standing here without the expertise of Tina Harper, Bob Lake and Felicia Satchell from the Food and Drug Administration.

The Food Allergy Initiative, American Celiac Task Force, Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network and so many others also deserve thanks for their continued dedicated advocacy.

I urge my colleagues to support S. 741 so that those with food allergies and celiac disease will have the dietary information they need at their fingertips.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.