

Representative Jim Costa (CA-21)
House Energy & Commerce Committee
Member's Day Hearing
December 12, 2025

- Thank you, Chairman Guthrie, Ranking Member Pallone, and Members of the Committee, for holding this Member Day hearing and for the opportunity to share three bipartisan health priorities.
- Today I want to briefly highlight: the Ian Kalvinskas (cal-VIN-skus) Pediatric Liver Cancer Early Detection and Screening Act; the Expanding Medical Education Act; and the National Plan for Epilepsy Act.

H.R. 5355 – Ian Kalvinskas Pediatric Liver Cancer Early Detection and Screening Act

- Ian's bill is very personal to our office.
- We hosted Ian Kalvinskas (cal-VIN-skus), who was diagnosed with liver cancer as a young teenager and survived thanks to a life-saving liver transplant.
- Unfortunately, a few years later, his cancer returned.
- But Ian cared deeply about giving back. Even while he was sick, when the opportunity to come to Capitol Hill came up, he said, "I want to make a difference now," and used his time here to advocate for earlier diagnosis and fairer treatment for children with liver disease.
- Ian passed away this June, during his time in my office.
- This bipartisan bill, which I lead with Congresswoman Van Duyne, honors his courage and advances the reforms he fought for.
- It would direct the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), with input from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to lead a national public education effort on pediatric liver disease so parents and providers can recognize early warning signs and understand options like living liver donation. It would also require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to review pediatric liver wait list outcomes and the value of adding liver screening, using existing resources at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

H.R. 2106 – Expanding Medical Education Act

- The Expanding Medical Education Act responds to a physician shortage that communities like mine feel every day. Too many families wait months for an appointment or drive hours just to see a doctor.
- The San Joaquin Valley has the lowest supply of doctors in California – where the ratio is 47 doctors per 100,000 residents.
- The bill would provide grants through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to help establish or expand medical schools in underserved communities, areas with no existing medical school, and at minority serving institutions, so we can train more doctors where we need them and where they are more likely to stay.

H.R. 1189 – National Plan for Epilepsy Act

- The National Plan for Epilepsy Act responds to a condition that affects 3.4 million Americans. For too many patients, current treatments do not work, and the federal response is fragmented.
- The bill would direct the Secretary of Health and Human Services to create and maintain a coordinated National Plan for Epilepsy, guided by a National Epilepsy Advisory Council that brings together federal agencies, clinicians, researchers, advocates, and people living with epilepsy to set goals, track progress, and get the most out of every federal dollar.

H.R. 1394 CURD Act

- The CURD Act would amend the Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act to codify the definition of ‘natural cheese’ in accordance with established cheese-making standard utilized by industry and consumers for decades in the United States. The legislation would help differentiate ‘natural cheese’ from ‘processed cheese.’
- Today, the term ‘natural cheese’ appears in federal regulation, yet remains undefined. Process cheese is defined by federal regulations. The definition of natural cheese codified in the CURD Act would mirror the one verified and certified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture Process Verified Program.
- The CURD Act has been under consideration by Congress since 2017 when it was moved through the Senate without objection via unanimous

consent. Since that time, the legislation has received two legislative hearings by the House Energy & Commerce Committee without raising significant objections on any language within the legislation.

- In addition to legislative consideration, the bill has also been subject to four rounds of technical assistance by the FDA.
- With the Administration's Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) initiative and the growing health concerns with ultra process foods (UPFs), natural cheese is a preferable alternative to UPFs. Thus, state legislatures are looking to the federal government to provide a uniform definition of natural cheese as an exemption from state regulation of UPFs.
- Finally, the CURD Act is strongly supported among state and national dairy associations as demonstrated by the attached industry support letter, urging the bill's enactment.
- We appreciate your attention to this pending legislation and encourage this Committee to include the CURD Act in its next appropriate hearing opportunity and move the legislation as quickly as possible.

Closing

- Together, these three efforts share a common purpose: to give every family a fair shot, whether that is catching liver cancer early, being able to see a doctor close to home, or living with epilepsy with better care and real hope for cures.
- Finally, Mr. Chairman, I have also submitted separate written testimony in support of H.R. 1395 – the CURD Act, along with the attached International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA) letter of support, and I would respectfully ask that they be included in the record as part of today's proceedings.
- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify, and I request that my full written statement be made part of the record.