

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Hearing on “Healthier America: Legislative Proposals on the Regulation and Oversight of Food”

April 29, 2026

I’m pleased we’re here today to discuss important legislation to ensure that the food Americans have access to is healthy and safe. This has been a priority of mine for decades.

We passed the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) in 2010 when I was the Chair of this Subcommittee. It was the largest reform of our nation’s food system in decades. FSMA moved the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to a strategy of stopping unsafe food from reaching our families and causing harm by providing the agency with the authority to set scientific guardrails over the food supply chain.

I was encouraged by the work coming out of the agency several years ago during the Biden Administration. The FDA successfully implemented the Human Foods Program to better focus on the food safety and prevention goals of FSMA, elevate the importance of nutrition and prevent diet-related diseases, and provide stronger oversight of the food supply in partnership with states. I was also pleased when the FDA finally banned Red Dye 3 in products that the agency regulates, including the food that we feed our kids. That chemical, shown to have lifelong health consequences for children, should never have been in our food supply and I fought for it to be banned for years.

Unfortunately, these successes are now clouded by the destruction and chaos that the Trump Administration has caused for our food supply. Within their first few weeks in office, the Trump Administration indiscriminately fired experts at the FDA, including 89 people in the Human Food Program with specific expertise in nutrition, infant formula, and food and chemical safety. The Deputy Commissioner of that program, Jim Jones, resigned just a few days after, noting that the terminations were “indiscriminate,” “short-sighted,” and made “the Trump Administration’s disdain for the very people necessary to implement [their] agenda” clear. These cuts showed the Trump Administration has no interest in protecting our families from harmful chemicals and showed complete disregard for the fragile infant formula market that parents rely on.

More recently, Trump signed an Executive Order to promote domestic production of glyphosate and even filed a brief with the Supreme Court arguing to shield Monsanto from lawsuits. Public health groups note this is a “total surrender to the chemical industry.” Trump ran on a promise of getting dangerous chemicals out of our families’ food but has done exactly the opposite.

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So while the Trump Administration is undermining food safety, it is important that Congress explore real solutions and I am glad this Committee is focused on this issue today with numerous bills led by my Democratic colleagues. We have continuously heard that FDA is not resourced to do the work that is needed on chemical safety, so my bill, H.R. 4958, the Grocery Reform and Safety Act, aims to address that along with the much-needed oversight of the chemicals that are put into our food. My bill, along with Rep. Schakowsky's H.R. 4306, the Food Chemical Reassessment Act, directly addresses the critical need to protect the food supply by requiring FDA to review chemicals in our food through a transparent, scientific process. Other bills would provide transparency for consumers to make informed decisions about the food they're eating and their health.

Democrats have also proposed three bills to ensure the formula and foods we feed our infants and babies are safe. These bills would protect our children from eating harmful chemicals in their food.

Although I am pleased the Republican majority is holding this important legislative hearing today, I'm concerned that some of the Republican proposals would actually undermine FDA's efforts to improve public health.

A MAHA leader noted that these proposals are, "a wish list for the chemical industry, weakening the already limited role of the FDA, expanding industry self-policing, and preempting state laws that have been leading the way on food safety." I agree. This is not the right path, and I hope we can have a productive discussion today on a better path forward.

And with that, I yield back the balance of my time.