

**Chairman H. Morgan Griffith Opening Statement**  
**Subcommittee on Health**  
***Healthier America: Legislative Proposals on the Regulation and Oversight of***  
***Food***  
**Wednesday, April 29, 2026 – 2:00 PM**

*As prepared for delivery.*

Today, we will be discussing bills that seek to improve the regulation and oversight of our nation's food.

First off, I want to commend the Administration's efforts to bring transparency to our food system, especially in the wake of the chronic disease epidemic facing our country.

Chronic diseases have become one of the primary drivers of health care spending in the nation and the Administration's efforts reflect a renewed commitment to long-term health, laying the groundwork for a healthier future where fewer Americans face preventable diseases.

This Administration has taken many steps to help combat the chronic disease epidemic in our country including reforming dietary guidelines, launching operation stork speed, phasing out certain food additives, and much more.

For too long, the status quo has remained unchanged.

That is why this hearing is an important first step for us to examine what regulatory standards and policies need to be reevaluated.

I also want to highlight the impact our food has on our children and the rise of childhood chronic disease.

Many of the chronic conditions children face today, such as obesity and diabetes, can be related back to some highly processed foods.

Prioritizing safer, higher-quality ingredients not only protects children at the onset, but also helps establish healthier dietary patterns, lowering the likelihood of chronic disease.

An important part of today's hearing will highlight various bills that reform the Generally Recognized as Safe, or GRAS, process.

In 1958, Congress created this framework so certain food additives that were deemed safe by the FDA would not need to go through the same lengthy review as a new food additive.

In short, GRAS was meant to avoid unnecessary red tape for ingredients that are already widely known as safe, but it was intended for common ingredients such as salt and baking soda.

Over time, the list has become extensive, and to no fault of the companies or regulators, many complex chemicals are now considered generally recognized as safe, using the pathway to avoid going through formal FDA approval.

Several of the bills before us today look at ways we can update the GRAS program to combat some of the challenges in the current regulations.

Furthermore, it is important that we empower Americans to take their health into their own hands by looking for ways to improve the labeling of our food products.

I have many allergies and so does one of my sons. Because of this, I spend a lot of time reading food labels.

I have Alpha-gal syndrome, which causes me to have a reaction to red meat and other mammalian derived products.

One of the bills we will consider today is led by Representative Van Drew of New Jersey and Representative Don Davis of North Carolina. H.R. 1178, the Alpha-gal Allergen Inclusion Act, of which I am a cosponsor, would classify

Alpha-gal as a major food allergen and require its identification on packaged food labels.

Other bills we will discuss attempt to bring more clarity and safety for certain foods such as poppy seeds, dairy products, orange juice, honey, food dyes and others.

These bills in front of us will also help cut red tape to ensure industry has the necessary information to correct any safety issues that come up during inspections.

Moreover, food safety and a stable food supply, which includes not putting unreasonable burden on food distributors, are central to keeping groceries affordable.

Whether from contamination recalls, inconsistent regulations, or bottlenecks in production or distribution, disruptions drive up costs that are ultimately passed on to shoppers.

American consumers need to be at the forefront of our discussion today, as we look for ways to not only safeguard our food supply but also ensure transparency, reduce unnecessary costs, and work to increase access to affordable, reliable food for all households.

I am looking forward to continuing to work with this Administration and advancing these goals and bills.

I appreciate our witnesses being here and look forward to the discussion.