

The Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) is an international, nonprofit association that has served for more than a century as a trusted convener of food safety professionals across state, local, federal, tribal, territorial, academic, and industry sectors. Our members are the state and local regulatory agencies responsible for most day-to-day food safety oversight in the United States, including inspections, laboratory testing, outbreak response, and recall verification. AFDO serves as a bridge between policy and practice, supporting coordination, training, and implementation so national food safety work can be carried out effectively across diverse jurisdictions. Our perspective is informed by daily collaboration with FDA and hands-on experience in regulatory programs that protect consumers.

AFDO's testimony focuses on the need for better federal–state information sharing. The U.S. food safety system works because it is a shared effort between FDA and state and local agencies. States are often the first to receive illness reports from consumers and to take action to investigate and control risks. When timely and complete information is not shared—especially during outbreaks or recalls—responses slow and risks to public health increase. These gaps also burden businesses, which are forced to respond to multiple, duplicative requests from different agencies. As FDA moves forward with efforts like the BRIDGE Project to better use state inspection capacity, information-sharing authorities and federal resources must keep pace so frontline agencies can respond quickly and effectively.

AFDO also urges the Subcommittee to apply federal preemption carefully. Preemption can be helpful when it is narrow, widely supported, and backed by sufficient federal responsibility and resources. When it is overly broad or under-resourced, it can slow the use of new science and weaken the federal–state partnership that food safety depends on. A balanced approach is essential to keeping the food safety system both consistent and responsive.