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Washington, D.C. -- Rep. Anna G. Eshoo, D-Palo Alto, made the following statement on the House floor today in support of her amendment to exempt state and local food safety laws from H.R. 4167, the National Uniformity for Food Act. The amendment would preempt state laws that require proper warnings on foods that contain carcinogens, chemicals that could cause birth defects and foods that could produce allergic reactions.

"Mr. Chairman, I thank my colleague for yielding me time.

"Mr. Chairman, I am really pleased to cosponsor this amendment. I think it is a very important one, and I think it is important also for people that are listening in across the country who support this amendment. Every leading environmental organization in the country supports this amendment, and consumer groups support this amendment.

"I think it is important for people across the country to know who is for the bill, and it will say something about the effort that is here on the floor today. The feed industry is for the bill. The frozen food people are for the bill. The Plastics Council is for the bill. Soft drink people, food processors, food additives.

"The food additives people are for the bill. Doesn't that say something about what is going into our food and lessens the standards in our country for what we consume? That just gives you, excuse the expression, a taste of who is for the bill.

"Now, this amendment allows States to retain and establish their own food safety warnings or standards to protect consumers in four key areas. It is against the risk of birth defects, it is against reproductive health problems, cancer and

allergic reactions. Those are four major areas that every single person in this country cares about because they are so serious.

"Without this amendment, States are going to have to come to the Federal Government and say, mother, may I?"

"My friends, nothing is broken. Nothing is broken. Were it not for these special interests that have lobbied so hard for this, which is what is wrong with Washington, D.C. today, we would not have to be on the floor fighting to protect what local governments and State governments have, the laws they have placed on the books.

"Now, here is an example. Here is an example of what we have in California. This is the warning. This is the warning that is in the grocery stores and the appropriate places for pregnant women and others to warn them: ``Pregnant and nursing women, women who may become pregnant, and young children should not eat the following fish," and it names them.

"You know what is going to happen when this thing becomes law? It is going to be buried on a Web site at the FDA. Who the heck is going to go on a Web site at the FDA to read the fine print to find out if they have a warning? That warning is not enforceable. That is why we are offering this amendment in the most key health areas. I would urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

"Mr. Chairman, I want to add one more comment to this: Whose constituent has come up to them and said, ``Get rid of these good laws in our respective States and local governments?" Not one of my constituents has.

"This is a march to folly, and that is why attorneys general across the United States are opposed to it, it is why food and agriculture heads from States are opposed to it. This is not about consumers, this is about special interests."

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