EXHIBIT 6
DATE 1-28-15
HB 245

My name is Mary McGonigle-Martin. I am a mother and school counselor from Murrieta, California. I had the opportunity to join a working group which created the Real Raw Milk Facts website for the purpose of disseminating accurate information regarding raw milk consumption. I encourage all of you to visit this website and watch the six victim videos before you vote on this bill. Unfortunately, these types of illnesses are not rare events.

My son Chris is the reason I am writing this letter. I have to look in the mirror every day and deal with the fact that I almost killed my son when I made the decision to give him raw milk. I had been led to believe by what I read from raw milk proponents that raw milk would be a healthier alternative to pasteurized milk. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Labor Day Weekend of 2006 changed our family's life forever. Little did we know the raw milk our son consumed was contaminated with E.coli 0157:H7. The first sign of trouble, a headache followed by fever and lethargy, was followed the next day with endless episodes of diarrhea, culminating that evening with blood in his stool. This signaled something was terribly wrong. From there, relentless, painful diarrhea and vomiting began, marking the beginning of our two month odyssey to Hell.

Our son fought a war. It was against something invisible. You can't see or smell E.coli 0157:H7 or the die off (called Shiga toxins) which are poisonous to the human body. The damage done by this bacterium is incomprehensible.

Five days after being admitted to the hospital, Chris was diagnosed with Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome, also known as HUS. HUS is a red blood cell disorder that damages the kidneys. During his stay in the hospital, he endured a ventilator, kidney dialysis, chest drainage tubes, central lines, PICC lines, blood, plasma and platelet transfusions, intravenous nutrition, narcotics, antibiotics, and surgeries. He recovered from renal failure, congestive heart failure, a collapsed lung, acute pancreatitis, high blood pressure and seizures. His medical bills totaled $550.000. For more details on my son's illness, please read his story posted on Food Safety News—Raw Milk: A Mother's Story. http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2012/04/is-the-foundation-of-good-health-found-in-a-bottle-of-raw-milk/#.VMWq4v10xD8

All this because he drank raw milk! Sadly, my son is not alone. Many others have suffered his same fate consuming something they believed to be healthy for them. We live in a time where we are so far removed from the horrors that occurred to children prior to mandatory pasteurization of milk, it is easy for people to be convinced that knowing your farmer and loving the cow will somehow magically prevent cow feces from getting into the milk. We are suffering from generational amnesia. Raw milk does not have any magical properties that kill bad bacteria if it gets into the milk via cow feces. If it did, there would never be any raw milk outbreaks or illnesses.

If I could turn back the clock to August of 2006, this is the information about raw milk I wish I knew:

1. All foodborne illnesses are preventable, especially from milk. Over 100 years ago, it was discovered if you cooked milk, like you cook meat, poultry and eggs it kills deadly pathogens. Pasteurization was invented for a reason.

2. Raw milk is a high risk food for deadly pathogens because they live in cow's feces. Cows lie in their own feces and defecate while be milked. The position of the cow's teats to the anus can cause cow feces to get into the milk. It is impossible to milk cows twice a day 365 days a year without making a mistake. Eventually, a pathogen will find its way into the milk. When people make a choice to drink raw milk, they are making a choice to possibly consume deadly pathogens.

3. Infants, children, the elderly, pregnant woman and anyone with a compromised immune system are at the greatest risk of becoming ill from contaminated raw milk. These high risk groups should not consume raw milk.

Over ten years between 2005 and 2014, the pathogen E.coli 0157:H7 was implicated in 16 raw milk outbreaks, 121 illnesses and 33 cases of HUS, with all but 1 suffering this fate being children, mostly under the age of 10. It is rare to develop HUS. Typically 2-8% of E.coli infections turn into HUS, so it is shocking to think that 26%, or ¼ developed this syndrome that leads to kidney failure after drinking raw milk contaminated with pathogenic E.coli.

I'm going to highlight the 3 most recent raw milk E.coli 0157:H7 outbreaks. I have had contact with all three mothers.

In 2014, Kentucky had a raw milk outbreak. The families were part of a private buyers club. Five children became ill and 4 developed HUS. One of the children was a 18 months old. He spent 2 weeks in the hospital and he needed kidney dialysis. His mother had been consuming raw milk for 8 years and had been giving it to her children for 6 years. For more details, please read this mother's story posted on Food Safety News—Why I'll Never Give Raw Milk to My Children Again. http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2014/10/draft-amy-nordykes-story/#.VMWstf10xD8

In 2013, Tennessee had a raw milk outbreak. It was a herdshare. Nine people became ill and three children developed HUS. One of the children was a five year old girl. She spent 25 days in the hospital, 18 days on dialysis and her hospitalization cost over $200.000.

In 2012, a horrific raw milk tragedy occurred in the state of Oregon. It was a small family operation with 4 cows which serviced 45 families. In April, 15 became ill with 4 children developing HUS. The herdshare members knew their farmer and the cows had access to grass, but this did not prevent the tragedy of cow feces getting in the milk.

The farmer who ran the herdshare has 5 children and 4 of his own children became ill, with his youngest developing HUS. A close friend of their family also had a 2 year old little girl that developed a severe case of HUS. She had a stroke which left her unable to walk or speak and she has to be fed through a feeding tube. She had damage to her pancreas and also had portions of her colon removed. A year a half ago she had to receive a kidney transplant. Her mother was the donor. The cost of medical care is over 1 million dollars. For more details, please read this story posted on Food Safety News—A Mom and a Dairyman Plead: Please Don't Feed Children Raw Milk.

http://www.foodsafetynews.com/2014/02/a-mom-and-a-dairymans-plea-dont-feed-children-raw-milk/#.VMWqGP10xD8

These are all well-meaning parents who thought they were doing something good for their families by providing their children raw milk. I ask all of you. Do you want tragedies like these happening in your state? Legalizing raw milk hurts children.

Sincerely,

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Distributed to the House Human Services Committee on January 28, 2015 by a coalition of Montana's public health organizations:

The Association of Montana Public Health Officials, the Montana Environmental Health Association and the Montana Public Health Association

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