

January 30, 2026

Dear Members of the Health and Government Operations,

Thank you for considering the important issue of food and milk product labeling, also known as date labeling for consumers. I am writing to share my experiences providing technical assistance to this Bill.

Below is my written testimony for support with amendments (FWA) to Testimony in Support of HB 410 Public Health - Food and Milk Product Labeling - Requirements, apresented by Regina T. Boyce, Legislative District 43A, Baltimore City.

To share my experience and expertise in this matter, I've been employed by the University of Maryland since 2014. My current title is a Senior Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Agent, and Affiliate to the Department of Nutrition & Food Science (since 2020). My position is to develop and implement community-based programs in food safety and nutrition. My role involves translating and disseminating scientific information to audiences ranging from youth to older adults, empowering them to make informed decisions that enhance their daily lives. I've served as a board member for the Partnership for Food Safety Education (2017-2023), contributing to national food safety initiatives and co-chaired the 2023 Consumer Food Safety Education Conference in Crystal City, VA. Additionally, I was elected Vice Chair and later Chair of the Food Safety Education and Professional Development Group under the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP) (2020-2025). Additionally, I was invited by Dr. Joshua Gurtler, Scientific Editor, to serve on the review board (2023-Present) for the Journal of Food Protection (IF=2.8), further reinforcing my standing in the field. My testimony is my own, and does not reflect the University of Maryland, nor my Department of Extension.

I understand that California is currently implementing AB 660 and can be a valuable resource for advising or modeling MDH's outreach and education efforts related to HB 410. In addition, the FDA and USDA are currently reviewing public comment in regards to FDA Docket No. FSIS-2024-0021, which can serve as another regional resource to help build a successful education campaign and be mutually beneficial.

Based on MDH's testimony, HB 8 - HGO - MDH - LOO, I do feel that additional clarification regarding shellfish should be considered, since it is an important part of the state's economy and is also addressed in AB 660. I think further clarification is needed around the appropriate use of over-labels.

Why is HB 410 important? When I teach consumers of all ages and backgrounds, whether it's during a nutrition, chronic disease prevention/management, or food safety workshop, there are lively discussions about date labeling confusion. For example, this past year, a program on herbs & spices across the state saw a 12.8% increase (statistically significant, $p < 0.05$; $n = 138$) in respondents' knowledge to better understand date labels.

Passing HB 410 with amendments, providing a strong social/marketing and education campaign led by MDH, can positively impact the health, food budgeting, and sustainability goals for current and future Marylanders. I look forward to providing any other information in support of HB 410. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Shauna C. Henley". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Shauna C. Henley