



# **S.T.O.P. - Safe Tables Our Priority**

*America's Voice for Safe Food*

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## STATEMENT OF NANCY DONLEY October 2, 2007

I'm honored to be here today with some of our country's leading food safety advocates from both the consumer and government sectors. These people have made food safety a cause because of their inherent belief in doing the right thing on the public's behalf. My reasons for doing so are different.

I was thrown into food safety advocacy after helplessly watching my only child, Alex, die a horrific death from E. coli poisoning when he was only 6 years old. It was then that I learned that our food supply is not safe. I did what most people did back then, and still do today...I assumed that food we could purchase in grocery stores or order in restaurants was safe. I was dead wrong.

I was so naïve to think, back in 1994, that all I needed to do was alert the government and industry that they had a problem; that people were getting sick and dying from contaminated food. Imagine my rage and despair to learn that they already knew about it!

That's why I find it particularly unconscionable that some members of Congress today would even consider putting more people at risk of deadly foodborne illness by allowing the interstate-shipment of meat & poultry products that have been produced under less rigorous, state inspection programs.

One need only read this report by the OIG to find ample reasons to prohibit state-inspected meat to be sold in interstate commerce. Frankly, this report leads my organization, S.T.O.P., to call for the abolishment of all state inspection programs altogether, period.

Right now we are in the midst of the second-largest ground beef recall in history. Granted this product was from a federally-inspected plant, where something obviously went very wrong that allowed nearly 22 million pounds of contaminated meat to be released into commerce.

However, I shudder to think if this recall—which currently spans 8 states—was from product produced under state inspection. More people would be placed at risk of deadly illnesses because states simply do not have the legal authority, communication infrastructures or resources to manage a recall of this scope.

Congress must not allow the voices of a few overpower the voices of the masses calling for safer food. The interstate shipment of state-inspected meat & poultry products is a bad idea and must not be allowed.