

NEWS RELEASE

Financial Haircut for the FDA Means More Health Freedom

Written by Scott C. Tips
Category: News Releases
Published: 22 June 2011

The NHF follows Congressional legislation closely and lobbies for and against bills on an ongoing basis. On Thursday, June 16th, the House passed H.R.2112 (the "Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act") for fiscal year 2012, by a vote of 217 For and 203 Against. The NHF supported passage of this bill.

The FDA part of the USDA/FDA spending bill included a spending reduction of \$285 million (12 percent) from this year's level of spending for the Agency. With regard to implementation of last year's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), there is a reduction of \$87 million dollars in spending for the FDA's food "safety" activities from this year's level. The NHF predicted this type of outcome when the FSMA passed last December, and it has now come to pass.

This seems like peanuts compared to the one billion dollars authorized for the FSMA over ten years in last year's law, but eight percent less real money is a good step toward stifling the Agency's ability to implement the mandated requirements of the FSMA. In testimony to the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee, FDA Commissioner Hamburg said that these cuts would delay such efforts from moving forward. At a minimum, we will have less taxpayer money wasted on useless FDA bureaucrats replacing good common sense, and usurping our rights to exercise health freedom of choice.

During House floor consideration, Congressmen Dingle and Waxman offered an amendment to cut programs under the jurisdiction of the US Agriculture Department by \$50 million to lessen the overall reduction in appropriated spending for FDA FSMA food safety activities. The amendment failed by a vote of 178 For and 241 Against. True to form, from last year, "grave" consumer food safety threats were cited, including an E. coli outbreak in Germany. Further, the nation's food supply was said to be extremely vulnerable, and that was used as another reason that the FDA must be given more money to keep our food supply "safe." Subcommittee Chairman, Congressman Jack Kingston (R-GA), presented the counter facts. He noted that we already spend a lot of money on food safety and that based on CDC data the US food safety rate is ninety-nine percent. I note that the FDA cannot even keep their own approved drugs from killing many tens of thousands of Americans each and every year.

The bill now goes to the Senate. As of now, passage of the House spending levels in the bill is not likely. Things can and do change. The NHF will be following this and will inform the community. As the oldest and best-respected health-freedom group on Capitol Hill, the NHF continues to be the credible source of objective assessment of, and proactive actions on, Congressional legislation and FDA matters that have material impact upon our freedom-of-health choices.

© 2011 Scott C. Tips