

October 4, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner Speaker of the House U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515 The Honorable Nancy Pelosi Democratic Leader U.S. House of Representatives Washington, DC 20515

Congress Must Stop Playing Games with Consumers' Health and Safety

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) opposes H.J. Res 77, which would single out FDA for funding through December 15 at the FY 13 sequester level. CSPI is a nonprofit health advocacy and education organization focused on food safety, nutrition, and alcohol issues. CSPI is supported principally by the 900,000 subscribers to its *Nutrition Action HealthLetter* and by foundation grants. We accept no government or industry funding.

FDA must be funded as it plays a vital national role in protecting consumers from contaminated and misbranded food. While we appreciate that many in Congress recognize the agency's importance, we cannot support legislation that takes a piecemeal approach to funding the government and that would make support for FDA a partisan issue. In addition, FDA's growing responsibilities require a funding level higher than that proposed in the legislation.

The irresponsible shutting down of government and particularly public health agencies like FDA and CDC places families at risk from foodborne diseases. But opening FDA alone would not solve this problem. Food safety is a joint governmental effort involving 13 different agencies often working collaboratively. We urge Congress to oppose cherry-picking certain priorities for funding in a piecemeal fashion because this is not a credible solution to this self-imposed budget crisis. The only credible solution is a wholesale solution that opens the government for business.

Congress should not play politics, at the expense of consumers. It is time for Congress to open the government and get our public health servants back to work.

Sincerely,

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