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CAMPAGNING FOR HEALTH, JUSTICE, SUSTAINABILITY, PEACE, AND DEMOCRACY



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Hillary: Where Do You Stand on GMO Labeling?

July 7, 2015 Organic Consumers Association by Katherine Paul and Ronnie Cummins [Genetic Engineering](#), [Politics & Globalization](#)

About a year ago, we (the Organic Consumers Association) launched a [petition](#) asking Hillary Clinton to support consumers, not Monsanto—or at the very least, support mandatory labeling of foods containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs).



We created the petition after [learning](#) about remarks Hillary made in her June 25 (2014) keynote address to the BIO International Convention in San Diego, Calif. In those remarks, Hillary expressed her enthusiastic support for GMO agriculture. She also perpetrated a lot of the same misinformation about genetic engineering that Monsanto and the rest of the industry regularly spout off about, including the lines about how there's no difference between hybridization and genetic engineering, and how drought-resistant seeds and crops are a big part of the biotech industry's game plan.

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Her appearance at the convention served as a reminder of Hillary's [deep ties](#) to Monsanto, ties that have earned her the title of "Bride of Frankenfood."

At the time we launched our petition, Hillary had not yet officially tossed her hat into the ring for the 2016 Democratic nomination. Now it's official. What isn't yet official, is where Hillary stands on consumers' right to know and states' rights to pass mandatory GMO labeling laws.

Does her support for Monsanto and the biotech industry mean she opposes labeling? Or will Hillary come out as pro-biotech but also pro-consumers' right to know?

The 2016 presidential election is about 16 months away, but the horserace has begun. And while Hillary was once thought to be the clear leader for the Democratic nomination, it appears now that Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), who is running as a Democrat, poses a realistic threat. The cast of characters on the Republican side continues to grow, but realistically, Jeb Bush, at least at this stage of the race, seems the likeliest of candidates. Bush hasn't publicly stated his position on GMO labeling.

So far, only Sanders has been clear about his stance on mandatory labeling of GMO foods and ingredients. In 2013, he [introduced](#) an amendment to the Farm Bill that would have guaranteed states the right to pass mandatory GMO labeling laws. The amendment was defeated by a [vote](#) of 71 to 27. (Sen. Murkowski of Alaska, which in 2014 passed a [law](#) requiring mandatory labeling of GMO salmon should the FDA approve it, was the only Republican who voted for the amendment).

Monsanto and Big Food have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to make sure they don't have to label GMO ingredients. And the spending continues, as high-profile [lobbyists](#) descend on Washington D.C. in an attempt to pass a federal law ([H.R. 1599](#)) that would guarantee, among other things, a total lack of transparency about GMO ingredients.

As we've learned over these past few years of ballot initiatives and legislative battles on the GMO labeling front, issues of food and health, corporate greed and political corruption, transcend political party affiliations. [Polling](#) numbers continue to confirm that more than 90 percent of Americans want food manufacturers to be required to disclose GMO ingredients on their packaging.

With those numbers, and the H.R. 1599 threat looming in Congress, it's time any serious presidential candidate show his or her hand on the GMO labeling issue. Which candidates will support mandatory labeling? Which candidates would instead support a bill like H.R. 1599, the "Mother of All Monsanto Protection Acts"?

We, the consumer movement for healthy food, a clean environment and corporate transparency, will have to demand answers if candidates like Hillary won't voluntarily disclose their position on labeling.

On July 3, Gary Hirshberg, chairman of the board of JustLabelIt.org, former CEO of Stonyfield Farms and a public supporter of GMO labeling, hosted a \$2700-per-person fundraiser for Hillary at his home in New Hampshire. [According](#) to the Boston Globe, Hirshberg said the fundraiser didn't necessarily mean he was supporting Hillary for president.

We were curious as to why someone so outspoken in the GMO labeling movement would

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host a fundraiser for a candidate so obviously pro-GMO, much less for a candidate he wouldn't, at least yet, publicly support. So we reached out to Hirshberg through Scott Faber, executive director of JustLabelIt.org. Faber responded that he had passed our email inquiry on to Hirshberg.

We haven't yet heard back from Hirshberg. Did he force Hillary to disclose her position on labeling? Before, during or after the fundraiser? Will she take a stand on this issue before the primaries?

Inquiring minds want to know.

Meanwhile, let's continue to post on Hillary's [facebook page](#) and [sign the petition](#), until we get an answer.

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