

women who take on these extraordinary challenges, capture the attention and the fascination of the world with their feats of physical and mental endurance. The men and women of the 44th Iditarod race are to be commended and congratulated.

With that, I yield the floor.

Mrs. FEINSTEIN. Mr. President, today I wish to express my opposition to the legislation introduced by Senator ROBERTS to preempt State labeling laws for genetically modified organisms, also known as GMOs.

The Mellman Group released a poll last year that found that 89 percent of Americans support mandatory labeling of GMOs. The calls and letters I receive from California constituents confirm widespread support for this policy. Since 2015, I have received more than 90,000 letters and emails from constituents who want a mandatory labeling standard. Since the beginning of this year, my office has received nearly 2,000 calls in favor of mandatory labeling.

Clearly, the public wants their food to be labeled in a consistent and transparent manner. However, Senator ROBERTS' proposal would preempt voter-passed mandatory GMO labeling laws in Connecticut, Maine, and Vermont. Overriding these State laws would be a step backward for consumer knowledge.

I recognize that the food industry cannot comply with 50 different State labeling laws. That is why I have cosponsored legislation introduced by Senator JEFF MERKLEY to create a consistent, transparent Federal standard on how to label foods that contain GMO ingredients. This legislation would require food producers to add a statement or symbol after the ingredient list to state that the product contains GMO ingredients. Companies would be given four options to meet the requirement.

In contrast, Senator ROBERTS' bill makes it more difficult for consumers to find out what is in their food. It requires the Department of Agriculture to create new, voluntary labeling guidance, despite the fact that the Food and Drug Administration already created voluntary guidance.

Furthermore, Senator ROBERTS' bill allows a confusing array of options for disclosure beyond labeling. This includes 1-800 numbers, Web sites, smartphone applications, and social media posts.

In my view, the only fair and consistent way to label food is on the package in a clear, straightforward, and consistent manner. Consumers do not have time to scan barcodes on food packages or to call 1-800 numbers. Consumers want the information they need to make the best choices for them and their families readily available on packaging. And I believe they deserve to have that information.

I want to make it clear that I recognize that the Federal Government and scientists agree that GMO products are

safe. I also realize that California farmers may need to rely on genetic engineering to address challenges such as climate change and disease. But I do not understand why industry is so opposed to informing consumers of how their food was produced. The industry says it should only be required to label foods when there is a human health reason to do so.

However, the Federal Government has always had labeling requirements for food that aren't due to a human health reason. These requirements exist because they allow consumers to make informed choices in the marketplace. For example, the Federal Government requires juice that was made from concentrate to be labeled "made from concentrate." The Federal Government requires foods processed with irradiation to be labeled as such. The Federal Government has a specific labeling requirement for what constitutes ground beef based on what parts of a cow is used, the fat content, and how it is processed.

During this election season, many Americans have expressed a view that Washington is out of touch with the rest of the country. So I want to ask, does Washington really want to overrule consumers who want GMO labeling? Does Congress know better than the majority of American consumers?

In my view, we should trust consumers and make sure they have the information they want on the food they buy. As such, I urge my colleagues to oppose Senator ROBERTS' preemption legislation. Instead, I ask my colleagues to engage in a meaningful discussion for how we can create a mandatory standard that is flexible for industry but gives consumers the information they want.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULIVAN). The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, I wish to start off my remarks with regard to the bill that is before us. There is an article from The Hill newspaper, and it is quoting Julie Borlaug, who is the granddaughter of Norman Borlaug, a University of Minnesota graduate who helped to spark the green revolution in agriculture technology that is credited with saving more than 1 billion people from dying of hunger.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the article from The Hill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Hill, Mar. 16, 2016]

SAFE, PROVEN BIOTECHNOLOGY DESERVES NON-STIGMATIZING NATIONAL LABELING STANDARD

(By Julie Borlaug)

Global hunger is one of the most pressing challenges of the 21st century and the problem will only get worse if the U.S. Senate fails to take action and prevent a costly state-by-state patchwork of labeling mandates for food containing genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

In a Senate Agriculture Committee mark-up last week, Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.)

correctly noted that "science is an essential piece of the puzzle in addressing food insecurity." The senator also praised the legacy of my grandfather, Dr. Norman Borlaug, a University of Minnesota graduate who helped spark the green revolution in agricultural technology that is credited with saving more than 1 billion people from dying of hunger.

I am glad to see my grandfather's work praised. And, as an associate director for the Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture, I want to see his work, and the work of his fellow agricultural scientists, protected. That means ensuring that innovations in agricultural biotechnology aren't sent to the dustbin of history, leaving future generations asking why good solutions were abandoned.

It really comes down to a simple label. In July, Vermont is set to become the first state to begin enforcing a GMO labeling mandate. The impacts will be felt on store shelves and in science labs around this country. Make no mistake—these state labeling efforts are not about a so-called 'right to know' but are about enabling activists to drive GMOs out of the marketplace. Leaders in the labeling movement acknowledge this, with one saying "If we have it labeled, then we can organize people not to buy it."

These dangerous efforts undermine the critical importance of biotechnology and the role it plays in feeding the world. With the help of modern science and GMOs, farmers now have the ability to produce crops that better withstand droughts and require fewer pesticides. They can adapt genetic codes to acclimate to new environments, and ensure that crops grow well despite inhospitable climates.

You cannot be anti-hunger and be anti-GMO. GMOs not only make farming more sustainable, they directly impact national and global food security at a time when warming temperatures and rising populations mean that those living in poverty will face increasingly unstable supplies of food.

The safety of GMOs is as clear as their benefits. Every major scientific organization that has examined this issue has concluded that they are safe as any other food. Those denying their safety are denying the science.

By allowing state-mandated on package labeling of GMO foods, Congress would be turning its back on decades of advancements in biotechnology and allowing a small group of activists to deny millions of people the tools that will prevent starvation and death. We cannot allow that to happen.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) has put forward a bipartisan proposal that would establish national standards for food made with genetically-engineered ingredients. The Biotech Labeling Solutions Act would prevent a costly state-by-state patchwork of labeling mandates. It would also help ensure that providing greater information could go hand-in-hand with providing greater education at a national level about the safety and importance of GMO crops. The Senate Agriculture Committee supported moving his bill to the full Senate by a 14-6 bipartisan vote.

Now, we need senators of both parties to come together to support this common-sense approach.

Sixteen years ago, my grandfather wrote that the world would soon have the agricultural technologies available to feed the 8.3 billion people anticipated in the next quarter of a century. The more pertinent question is whether farmers and ranchers will be permitted to use these technologies.

The members of the Senate will decide that very question in their votes on the Biotech Labeling Solutions Act. For the sake of science and the world, the answer needs to be yes.