

As an advocate for agriculture and animal welfare, I am proud to be a co-sponsor of the Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2012, a common-sense bill that will help farmers, consumers, and animals. This legislation is proof that animal welfare and what's good for industry economics are not mutually exclusive.

I strongly believe that existing food safety and animal welfare regulations need to be strengthened and the Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2012 aims to set strong welfare standards for hens. If this common-sense legislation becomes law, it would phase-in requirements to double the space per hen, provide environmental enrichments such as perches and nesting boxes, and ban starvation molting. It would also give consumers more information by adding labels to egg cartons identifying the method of production (e.g. "eggs from caged hens" and "eggs from cage-free hens"). The Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2012 was introduced on January 23, 2012 and has been referred to the House Committee on Agriculture. If this piece of legislation comes before me for a vote on the House floor, I will certainly support it.

You may have heard recently of the agreement that the Humane Society of the United States and Ohioans for Humane Farms, Ohio agriculture leaders, and Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland struck to improve welfare standards for egg-laying hens in that state. The Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2012 is based on the provisions of the agreement in Ohio.

In addition to supporting the Egg Products Inspection Act Amendments of 2012, I have long been a voice in Congress for strengthening food safety regulations. For example, I am a co-sponsor of the Preservation of Antibiotics for Medical Treatment Act of 2011, H.R. 965. If this bill is enacted, it would amend the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act to preserve the effectiveness of medically important antibiotics by withdrawing them from 'non-therapeutic' purposes in food-producing animals unless they can be proven to pose no harm to human health. I have also used my position as the Ranking Member on the Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee to ensure that the FDA and USDA do more to keep our food healthy, safe and secure.

I fervently believe that Congress should improve existing animal welfare guidelines and I am proud to be a member of the Congressional Animal Protection Caucus (CAPC), which raises awareness of animal welfare issues to other Members of Congress. On this front, I am a co-sponsor of the Downed Animal and Food Safety Protection Act (H.R. 3704), which would require 'downed' livestock to be humanely euthanized and prevent them from entering our food system. In addition, I am a co-sponsor of the American Horse Slaughter Prevention Act (H.R. 2966) which would prohibit the slaughter and selling of horses to be used for human consumption. Both of these bills have been referred to the Subcommittee on Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry and I will vote for them on the House floor if either comes up for a vote.

As you can see, I am deeply engaged on food safety and animal welfare issues. In the future I hope you will reach out to me and let me know of the issues that matter to you most.

