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Attn: Representative Casey, Chair House Health and Human Services
and Committee Members

Testimony in Support of H 5313
An Act Relating to Food and Drugs- Sanitation in Food Establishments
Before the House Health and Human Services

Rhode Island Farm Bureau Federation is an independent, non-governmental grassroots organization made up of farmers and others with agricultural interests. Today our over 1200 RIFB members are not only large farmers and small farmers, but also includes those engaged in agricultural industries, teachers of agriculture and consumers.

The Rhode Island Farm Bureau is in support of H 5313, which would include pickles and relish in 21-27-6.1 of RI General Laws. The current law already requires "Recipe(s) for each farm home food product with all the ingredients and quantities listed, and processing times and procedures, are maintained in the kitchen for review and inspection." With this requirement already in the law, we see no reason why pickles and relishes, using approved recipes, should not be included in the list of allowable foods.

In addition, RI Farm Bureau would like to ask the committee to consider the addition of the words "acidified foods" or replacing the word "acid" with "acidified". Current law allows for "Jams, jellies, preserves and acid foods, such as vinegars, that are prepared using fruits, vegetables and/or herbs that have been grown locally". Because vegetables and herbs do not have sufficient acid to be preserved *without* the addition of vinegar or another acid, we believe the intent of this law was to allow pickles and relishes to be included. Preserved foods are very often *acidified* foods, rather than acid foods before processing. To clarify, per the USDA: If the raw or initial product has a pH above 4.6 it is considered a low acid food. If the pH is below 4.6 then the food is classified as an acid food. Acidified foods are low acid foods to which acid or acid ingredients are added to produce a final equilibrium pH of 4.6 or below.

Many farmers have farm stands and/or attend farmers markets. Locally grown and produced foods are very popular and help farms to increase sales and bring more customers to their business. We feel that not allowing Rhode Island farmers to manufacture pickles and relishes in their approved farm kitchens may limit them to purchasing product not produced or packaged locally, but simply labeled with their farm name. There is increasing demand for these local food products and by following the procedures already set out for other products manufactured in a farm home kitchen, our Rhode Island farms would have the ability to add pickles and relishes to the list of safe and local products they sell to their customers. We ask you to vote in support of H 5313.

Henry B. Wright III
President, RI Farm Bureau