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**REMARKS OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY ON INCREASING FDA
RESOURCES**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

There are some debates in Washington that you need to be an expert to understand. And there are others that are as plain as the headlines in the morning paper.

Here's the headline from the Washington Post from November 11th: "Chinese Government Admits Toys Contained 'Date Rape' Chemical."

November 29th from the Post: "Bad Pet Food May Have Killed Nearly 350."

September 27th from the Associated Press: "Hamburgers may be tainted with E. Coli"

October 31st from the New York Times: "Chinese Chemicals Flow Unchecked to Market."

And here's one just from today.

"Stopping Deadly Bacteria: Meat processors look for ways to keep ground beef safe."

Every family knows that they're at risk. Unsafe food. Toys contaminated with lead paint and other toxins. Dangerous drugs that should have been pulled from the shelves but weren't.

A trip to the store has become a minefield of tough choices.

And every family knows that the government ought to be doing more to protect them – but the need for action was brought home by a stunning new report that reads like an indictment of years of neglect and starvation budgets for the nation's public health watchdogs.

Just listen to the conclusions of the FDA Science Advisory Board:

"Finding #1: The FDA cannot fulfill its mission because its scientific base has eroded and its scientific organizational structure is weak.

Finding #2: The FDA cannot fulfill its mission because its scientific workforce does not have sufficient capacity and capability.

Finding #3: The FDA cannot fulfill its mission because its information technology infrastructure is inadequate."

Let there be no doubt – these deficiencies put American families at risk. Here again, the language of the report could not be more plain nor its warning more dire.

“FDA does not have the capacity to ensure the safety of food for the nation.”

We’re here to say that this must change.

The first order of business is for the President to withdraw his threat to veto the very bill that funds FDA.

FDA needs more resources, and more support to do the job that American families are counting on it to do.

Senator Durbin and I call on the White House to submit a budget request this year that puts us on the path to double FDA’s food safety resources over five years – and we call on our colleagues to provide the funding to meet that target.

FDA also needs more authority to see that foods are safe.

In our FDA reforms enacted earlier this year, we took strong action to give the FDA the tools it needs and greater resources to protect Americans from unsafe drugs – and we should do the same for food.

We need comprehensive preventive measures, effective surveillance, and robust authority for FDA to take action where needed to protect lives.

There’s no mystery to how to improve food safety. The Europeans have a strong system, and so do the Japanese. Americans sometimes get the foods that they reject. That has to change. And the change must start now.

I am working with my colleagues on the health committee and throughout the Senate on comprehensive bipartisan legislation to protect the food supply – and this proposal ought to be the first order of business for the Senate in the new year.

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