

ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE

SECOND SESSION

LEGISLATIVE RESOLUTION 414

Introduced by Davis, 43.

WHEREAS, virtually all imported consumer goods including pet treats, clothing, tools, and electronic equipment are required to be labeled indicating their country of origin as a condition of entry into the United States; and

WHEREAS, Nebraska consumers appreciate such origin markings as they empower us to exercise choices in the marketplace, including which country's producers and manufacturers to support with our purchasing dollars; and

WHEREAS, until recently, the United States was one of the few developed countries in the world that did not require country of origin labels (COOL) on such staple food items as fruits, vegetables, and meat; and

WHEREAS, Congress remedied that deficiency by passing a law as part of the 2002 Farm Bill that required fruits, vegetables, and meat to be labeled as to their country of origin, but meat importers effectively delayed the law's implementation until 2009, at which time the implementing regulations allowed meat such as beef that was exclusively born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States to nevertheless be mislabeled as if it was a mixed-origin product from Mexico, Canada, and the United States; and

WHEREAS, the countries of Canada and Mexico did not want their meat products labeled according to origin in the United States market, and filed

a complaint with the World Trade Organization which determined that the mixed-origin label allowed on meat that was exclusively born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States caused consumer confusion; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued a rule effective November 23, 2013, that corrected the COOL regulations by disallowing mixed-origin labels on meat exclusively born, raised, and slaughtered in the United States. However, Canada, Mexico, and domestic meat importers are now working to convince Congress to eliminate or weaken COOL, which would deprive the citizens of the United States of the proper labeling that informs them where the meat they purchase for themselves and their families was born, raised, and slaughtered.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA, SECOND SESSION:

1. That the Legislature requests that the United States Congress, President Barack Obama, the United States Secretary of Agriculture, and the United States Trade Representative defend and protect the right of Nebraska citizens, as well as all citizens of the United States, to be informed of the origins of their meat purchases by rejecting any effort to change the current law governing country of origin labeling.

2. That the Legislature further requests that the United States Congress, President Barack Obama, the United States Secretary of Agriculture, and the United States Trade Representative notify the World Trade Organization that it must not intrude on the sovereignty of the United States by attempting to undermine United States law governing country of origin labeling.

3. That a copy of this resolution be sent to President Barack Obama, United States Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, United States Trade Representative Michael Froman, and each member of the Nebraska congressional delegation.