

Representative:

My name is Frank Pagurko, and I write to you on behalf of the Rio Grande Foundation, an economic policy think tank based in Albuquerque. We work to promote the interests of the people of New Mexico through free market policy.

In the interest of all New Mexicans, I strongly urge you to **vote YES** on HB 177, the Homemade Food Act. New Mexico has some of the most restrictive laws in the country on the cottage food industry. Albuquerque bans the cottage food industry entirely. As the pandemic has forced many people to turn to alternative ways to support their families, it is time for the laws to change. Our state currently mandates that cottage food producers obtain permits requiring thousands of dollars in kitchen upgrades, and even with a permit, food products can only be sold in certain venues. Food does not change in quality if it is sold at a farmers market rather than neighbor-to-neighbor, but current law ignores this. This bill carries no safety concerns, as it applies only to shelf-stable foods. In the 49 states in which it is legal to sell these foods there have been essentially zero complaints of foodborne illness. Moreover, HB 17 does not remove government oversight over safety standards, but instead makes it less burdensome.

There is no reason not to reform New Mexico's cottage food laws, and now is the time to do so. Please vote yes on HB 177. Thank you.



Frank Pagurko III