

# Press Release from State Senator Bob Hagan

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## **Ohio Health Officials Praise Hagan Bill to Ban Schools from Buying Poultry Treated with Cipro-like Antibiotic** *Use of Cipro-like Poultry Drugs Linked to Serious Food Poisoning*

(Columbus) – Ohio health officials today praised State Senator Robert F. Hagan, D-Youngstown, for introducing a bill to ban public schools from purchasing poultry treated with Cipro-like antibiotics whose use promotes spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria that cause severe food poisoning. The bill, Healthy School Lunch Act, originally introduced in December ([http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=125\\_SB\\_282](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=125_SB_282)), also would require animal feed distributors and drug retailers to report their sales of animal antibiotics to the Ohio Agriculture Department and State Pharmacy Board.

In October 2000, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed to ban the use of Cipro-like antibiotics in poultry. The drug in question, trade name “Baytril,” is made by Bayer Corp. and is almost identical to Cipro. (Both are members of the fluoroquinolone class of antibiotics.) FDA concluded that Baytril use in poultry reduces the effectiveness of Cipro in treating *Campylobacter*, the most common cause of severe bacterial food poisoning. Bayer has refused to withdraw Baytril from the market and instead has fought the proposed ban over the last four years, despite a March ruling by an FDA administrative law judge upholding the proposed ban.

“If poultry producers can meet the demand of huge restaurant chains to raise chickens without treating them with fluoroquinolones, our public schools should demand it too,” said Sen. Hagan, a member of the Health, Human Services & Aging Committee.

Hagan noted that McDonald's, Dairy Queen, Burger King, Domino's, Hardee's, Wendy's, Popeye's and Subway say they no longer buy chicken treated with fluoroquinolones. Six of the top 20 poultry producers, including Tyson, Gold Kist, ConAgra, Perdue, Foster Farms, and Claxton say they no longer use fluoroquinolones to treat chicken for human consumption.

A study published in the January 2003 issue of *Consumer Reports* showed that 42 percent of the chickens CR bought at supermarkets and other stores were contaminated with *Campylobacter* bacteria and 90 percent of the *Campylobacter* tested showed resistance to at least one antibiotic.

“Fluoroquinolone-resistant strains of *Campylobacter* are infecting more and more people who respond poorly or not at all to treating their food poisoning with fluoroquinolones,” said John Gwinn, PhD, President, Ohio Association of Boards of Health. “In addition, it's absurd that there are no official data on use of antibiotics in agriculture. We applaud Sen. Hagan for this bill addressing the human health crisis of antibiotic resistance linked to animal agriculture.”

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's most recent data show that in 2001 more than one in six *Campylobacter* infections were resistant to fluoroquinolones. A decade ago - before the FDA approved fluoroquinolones for poultry use - such resistance was negligible,” said Steven Gordon, M.D., Department of Infectious Diseases, The Cleveland Clinic Foundation. “We commend Sen. Hagan for sponsoring this bill to prolong the efficacy of these potentially life-saving antibiotics.

The Ohio Association of Boards of Health is among 380 health, agriculture and other groups nationwide, including 35 groups in Ohio, that have endorsed a bipartisan bill (H.R. 2932) by U.S. Rep. Sherrod Brown, D-OH, to phase out over two years the use of antibiotics that are important in human medicine as animal feed additives.