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UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ROSA L. DELAURO  
3RD DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

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September 23, 2016

The Honorable David Michaels, PhD, MPH  
Assistant Secretary of Labor  
Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
United States Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room S2315  
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Assistant Secretary Michaels:

I am writing as a follow up on the letter of May 11 signed by 18 members of Congress, urging OSHA to continue its increased enforcement focus on occupational hazards faced by poultry processing and meatpacking workers.

The recent report published by the Government Accountability Office in May confirmed that workers in the poultry and meat industries continue to be exposed to dangerous conditions and are denied adequate medical treatment when they are injured on the job. The report found that workers continue to suffer from amputations, serious cuts, broken bones, concussions, chemical burns and serious musculoskeletal disorders.

Further, the results of recent OSHA investigations in the poultry industry have revealed multiple high gravity serious and repeat violations in the industry. Further, OSHA's own data on severe injury reports shows that the poultry industry reported over 115 amputations and hospitalizations to OSHA in a 15 month period—with the industry leader, Tyson Foods, reporting 51 of these serious injuries. In fact, the poultry industry has one of the highest number of reported severe injuries.

I applaud OSHA for its attention to the serious and widespread safety and health hazards in the meat and poultry industry. The GAO report and recent OSHA findings are clear signs that increased OSHA enforcement in this industry is necessary to ensure the health and safety of American workers.

I call on OSHA to continue all the Regional and Local emphasis programs the agency initiated in 2015 and 2016 in the meat and poultry industry—and urge you to consider implementing a National Emphasis Program. I also strongly encourage you to work closely with State OSHA plans to ensure they too increase their focus on occupational hazards faced by poultry and meatpacking workers.

All workers have the right to a safe workplace and no worker should have to sacrifice their safety for a paycheck.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rosa L. DeLauro".

Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress