

A bill to block GMO labeling fails key Senate vote

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A bill that would have stopped states from mandating labels for genetically engineered food failed a key vote on [March 16]. The measure would have quashed local laws, including one about to take effect in Vermont, that require food companies to label packages with genetically modified ingredients.

The Senate's rejection of the current bill doesn't mean its dead. Senators are likely to resume negotiations on the bill after they return from a two-week break and vote on it again. . . .

Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) sponsored the bill and got broad support from his party. But Republicans needed the help of farm-state Democrats who wound up voting against it. Earlier this month [I predicted](#) that Roberts would need to compromise with Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) to get this passed. . . . But Roberts never compromised. . . And on [March 15], [after meeting with organic industry leaders](#), Sen. Stabenow said she was against the bill as it stood. She wants something that will provide eaters with more information than they currently get, but that wouldn't stigmatize GMOs.

. . . .Before the vote, Roberts sounded like someone playing the long game. "We are working both sides of the aisle very hard and, if we are not successful in getting 60 [votes] ... we will have to come back after the [Easter] break and get something done," Roberts said on [March 15], [according to Politico](#).

Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) proposed an amendment that could serve as a compromise and draw in those 60 votes. His amendment would give food manufacturers a chance to propose their own method of labeling. If companies failed to come up with a transparent method in three years, then labeling would become mandatory. . . .

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