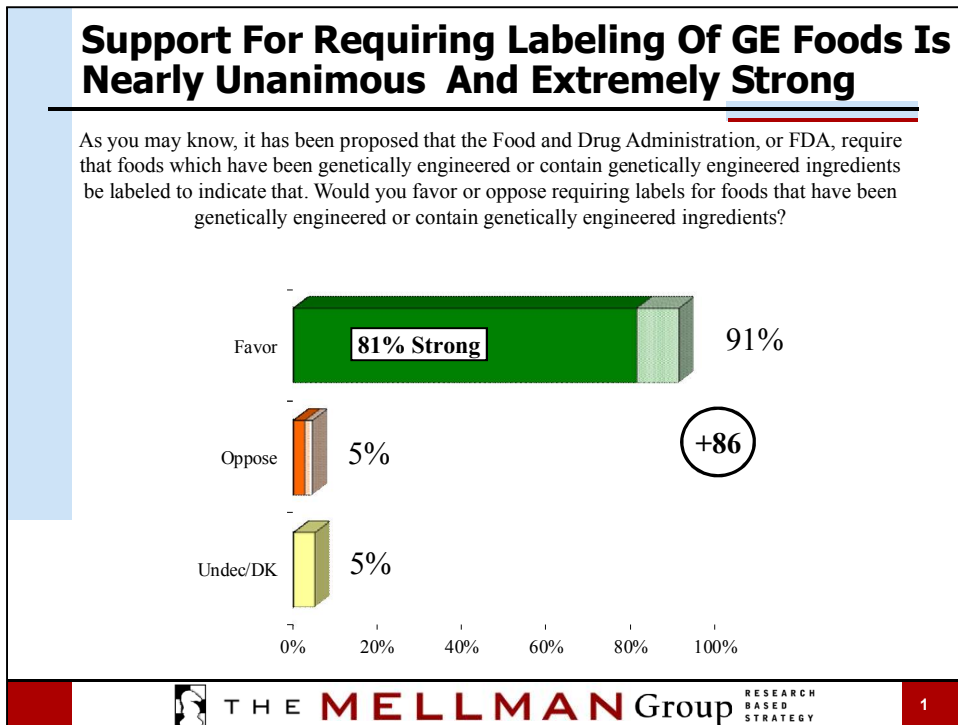




TO: Just Label It!
FROM: The Mellman Group, Inc.
RE: Voters Overwhelmingly Support A Labeling Requirement For GE Foods
DATE: March 22, 2012

This analysis represents the findings of a survey of 1000 2012 general election voters. Interviews were conducted by telephone February 14-19, 2012 using a national registration-based sample. The margin of error for this survey is +/-3.1% at the 95% level of confidence. The margin of error is higher for subgroups.

SUPPORT FOR MANDATORY LABELING OF GENETICALLY ENGINEERED FOODS IS NEARLY UNANIMOUS



Outside of motherhood and apple pie, few topics in American public opinion can muster over 90% support for a given side, but our recently completed poll shows that support for mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods is one of those few views held almost unanimously. More than 9 in 10 voters (91%) favor the FDA requiring that “foods which have been genetically engineered or containing genetically engineered ingredients be labeled to indicate that.” A mere 5% oppose such a

requirement and another 5% don’t know¹.

Views on this question are remarkably intense, with an 81% supermajority not only favoring mandatory labeling but “strongly” favoring the proposal. These views are widespread across demographic lines, with nearly all Democrats (93% favor, 2% oppose), independents (90% favor, 5% oppose) and Republicans (89% favor, 5% oppose) in favor of labeling.

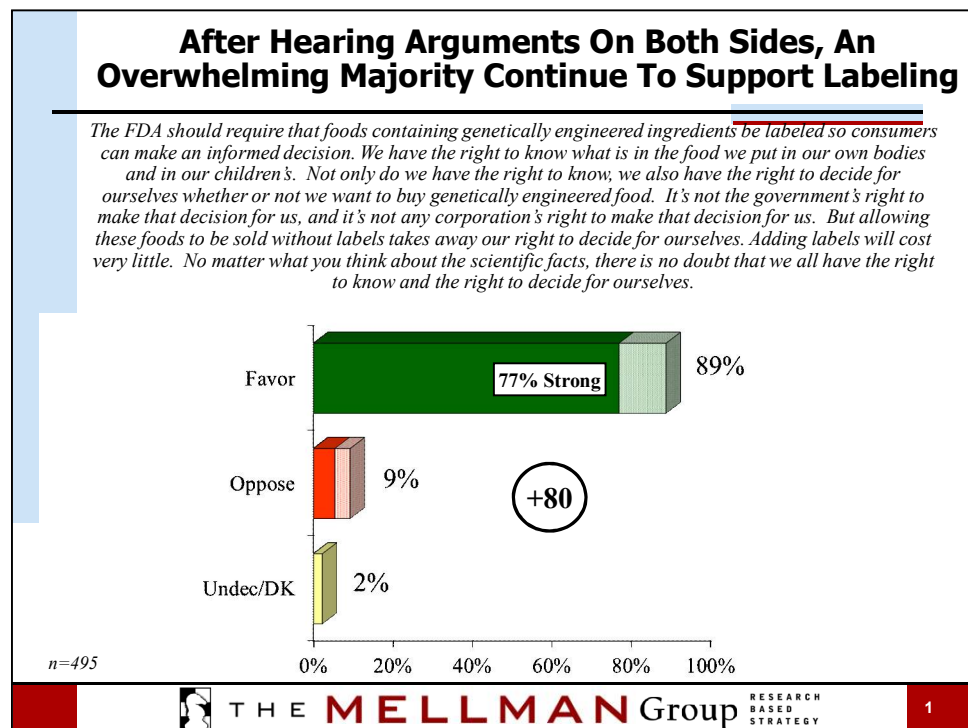
¹ "As you may know, it has been proposed that the Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, require that foods which have been genetically engineered or contain genetically engineered ingredients be labeled to indicate that. Would you favor or oppose requiring labels for foods that have been genetically engineered or contain genetically engineered ingredients? Is that strongly or not so strongly?"

Concern about genetically engineered foods runs deep. A plurality of voters favor banning the sale of genetically engineered foods in the U.S. altogether (41% oppose allowing sale, 33% favor, 20% undecided).

None of these views are surprising when voters' underlying attitudes toward genetically engineered foods are taken into account. Contrary to the official position of the FDA, nearly two thirds (64%) take the position that "There is an important difference between genetically modified foods and foods that have not been genetically modified" (24% no difference, 15% don't know). Only about one-in-four voters (26%) are convinced that genetically engineered foods are "basically safe" (34% unsafe, 41% no opinion)².

SUPPORT FOR MANDATORY LABELING IS BOTH STRONG AND ROBUST

It's one thing for a position to draw strong support in a vacuum. It's quite another thing for a position to evidence robustness by continuing to draw strong support even in the face of strongly worded arguments from opponents. We presented voters with the following argument against requiring mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods:



The Food and Drug Administration, or FDA, should NOT require foods containing genetically engineered ingredients be labeled. Labels will just increase the cost of food, burden American companies with excessive, unnecessary regulations and add to the big federal government bureaucracy. Genetically engineered foods have been found safe by the FDA and there is no scientific evidence at all that genetically engineered foods do any harm. Genetically engineered crops have been planted since 1996 in the US and in many other countries. Hundreds of millions of meals containing food from genetically engineered crops have been consumed, and there has not been a single substantiated instance of illness or harm. What's more, genetically engineered foods can help feed the world by increasing crop yields. When you think about the increased food costs, the lack of scientific evidence that there is even a problem, and the needs of hungry people all over the world, labels just aren't worth it.

² "Do you think genetically engineered foods are basically safe, basically unsafe, or don't you have an opinion on this?"

Voters also heard this argument in favor of mandatory labeling:

The FDA should require that foods containing genetically engineered ingredients be labeled so consumers can make an informed decision. We have the right to know what is in the food we put in our own bodies and in our children's. Not only do we have the right to know, we also have the right to decide for ourselves whether or not we want to buy genetically engineered food. It's not the government's right to make that decision for us, and it's not any corporation's right to make that decision for us. But allowing these foods to be sold without labels takes away our right to decide for ourselves. Adding labels will cost very little. No matter what you think about the scientific facts, there is no doubt that we all have the right to know and the right to decide for ourselves.

Even after voters hear powerful arguments against labeling, support for mandatory labeling of genetically engineered foods proves not only strong, it turns out to be exceptionally robust, with an 89% supermajority continuing to choose the pro-labeling position over the anti-labeling position -- including a 77% supermajority who say they "strongly" prefer the labeling position -- versus just 9% who take the opposition side (2% remain undecided). Once again, that strong support is very widespread and bipartisan, cutting across all demographic lines, with huge majorities of Democrats (85% favor, 11% oppose), independents (93% favor, 6% oppose) and Republicans (88% favor, 10% oppose) continuing to favor the pro-labeling side despite having been exposed to strong arguments from the opposition.