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Good afternoon, my name is Robert Zavoski, MD, MPH, President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and Medical Director of Community Health Services, a community health center in Hartford. I am here to offer the Academy of Pediatrics' support to Proposed Bill 5234, An Act Banning Pesticide Use in Middle and High Schools.

Children are not little adults. Their physiology and anatomy are different than those of adults, placing them at additional risks when exposed to poisons and toxins in their environments above those faced by adults. Children's metabolic rates are relatively rapid, therefore children and adolescents breathe faster than do adults; their skin is thinner and therefore more likely to absorb toxins; children are shorter with their airways closer to the ground and thus inhale more of ground level toxins than do adults; children are developmentally immature and therefore less likely to recognize risks and take the proper precautions or actions when exposed to toxins. For all of these reasons, children are at far greater relative risk from poisons and toxins in their environment than are adults. In addition, children hopefully have longer to live than adults, therefore the cumulative effects of toxins over time are more likely to effect children than they are to effect adults.

Lastly, the long term adverse effects of many toxins are simply not known. It takes relatively little time to develop a new chemical but generations to determine its long term toxicity. History has many examples of "safe" procedures or products, such as asbestos, arsenic treated lumber, chlordane, DDT, diethylstilbestrol, etc, later found to be unsafe or deadly. It is therefore vitally import to limit exposure to such substances to only the necessary circumstances.

Pesticide use on school athletic fields and lawns is not a necessary exposure. Generations of children have successfully played and competed on fields that were not aesthetically perfect. The risk of pesticides to the present and future health of our children does not justify the use of these toxins; their use should be prohibited.

Thank you for your kind attention.