

Before the Connecticut General Assembly Environmental Committee, March 2, 2009, Testimony in Support of **HB 6572** and **SB 919**:

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy, and members of the Environmental Committee, my name is Amanda R. Just, and my testimony is in support of "**HB 6572** and **SB 919**." Thank you for the opportunity to have my words heard on this important issue. I regret that I cannot deliver them in person, but as a middle school teacher, I feel that it is my responsibility to be in school today, especially considering that I am administering the Connecticut Mastery Tests at this time.

As a teacher, writer, musician, artist, and native of East Lyme, I never expected that I would become an activist in educating people about the dangers of toxins, but an accident in 2004 during a routine medical procedure overseas left me with severe heavy metals poisoning. The poisons inadvertently dropped into my jaw interacted with other "acceptable chemicals" in my body and lead me to become very sick, very fast. I was gradually forced to reconcile with the fact that I had become a chemical disaster.

In addition to a plethora of other health problems that developed after the dental accident, I lost 48 lbs., developed tremors, lost patches of hair, had scabs appear on my scalp, and watched my toenails turn completely yellow. My failing health eventually led me on a desperate journey to save myself because I felt like I was dying. In order to survive, I came to a new understanding that toxins affect our bodies as much as germs do. Over time, I discovered that in addition to mercury and lead, Bisphenol A and PBDEs had also taken their toll on my body.

It was an awful and scary moment in my life to admit that I was "toxic." It is widely accepted in our medical community that germs and bacteria can have a crippling, sometimes fatal, impact upon the human body. Society seems to be in denial about recognizing that toxic elements are equally debilitating, but I hope that Connecticut will be a leader in this country by admitting to a painful fact the world is slowly coming to learn: toxins kill.

We have become a much more environmentally-aware and "green" country over the past few years, but the issue of toxins still plagues us. It has been left to the states to act and protect residents from these harmful, handicapping, and sometimes deadly poisons.

As a teacher at East Lyme Middle School, the same middle school I attended as a student, my own students are my main inspiration for speaking out about toxins. Companies like Toys "R" Us and Wal-Mart have phased out sales of toxic toys and products containing Biphenol-A, yet we still continue to find these chemicals hidden in products that are impairing not only the health of adults, but even more importantly, the safety of our children and fetuses.

I now read the labels on every product I buy, but then again, I have the benefit of knowing about toxins. After all, I survived them. It is imperative that the state legislature act swiftly to protect my fellow citizens and me from harmful toxic chemicals. We need to act to prevent anyone else from suffering the same fate I did, which could have been far worse had I not been awakened to the dangers of toxins. Please know that **HB 6572** and **SB 919** are about saving lives. Be a leader and a pioneer in health by doing your part to eliminate the exposure of the people of the State of Connecticut to crippling and deadly toxins, and pass these bills from your committee without amendments. Thank you very much for considering this testimony.

Most Sincerely,  
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