



377 Research Parkway, Suite 2-D
Meriden, CT 06450-7160
203-238-1207

**TESTIMONY RE: RAISED BILL 5314 AN ACT CONCERNING CHILD SAFE
PRODUCTS AND BANNING CADMIUM IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS**

**Select Committee on Children
March 2, 2010**

TO: Senator Musto, Representative Urban and members of the Select
Committee on Children
FROM: Anne Hulick, RN, MS, JD; Environmental Health Coordinator,
Connecticut Nurses' Association

Good morning Senator Musto, Representative Urban and members of the Select
Committee on Children.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut
Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in
Connecticut (CT), representing over 52,000 nurses. I am Anne Hulick, RN, MS, JD, a
nurse with many years of experience in critical care, cardiology, nursing administration
and most recently, as the Environmental Health Coordinator for CNA. The Connecticut
Nurses' Association strongly supports H.B. 5314, *An Act Concerning Child Safe
Products and Banning Cadmium In Children's Products*.

H.B. 5314 builds upon Connecticut's successes in phasing out toxic chemicals,
such as lead and Bisphenol-A, from children's products. While CT now has the strongest
ban on Bisphenol-A in the country, we will not be successful in reducing exposure to
toxic chemicals by phasing them out one chemical at a time. H.B. 5314 provides a more
comprehensive approach to toxic chemical management as it requires the adoption of a

list of the most harmful chemicals which will be banned from children's products, unless there are no safer alternatives.

Why is this so important? There are three critical points to consider.

First, since 1950, over 82,000 chemicals have been introduced into commerce and are found in the products we use every day. Only a handful of these chemicals have been tested for safety because, under the federal Toxic Substances Control Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) must prove that a chemical causes an unreasonable risk to health before it can be regulated. As a result of this burden, EPA has only been able to regulate five of these chemicals.

Second, is that a significant amount of recent rigorous, independent research exists which demonstrates that many of these chemicals are carcinogens, neurotoxins and endocrine-disruptors. Medical professionals once believed that a developing fetus was shielded from exposure to toxic chemicals by the placenta. However, in recent laboratory analyses, over 287 of these toxic chemicals were found in umbilical cord blood. The issue is whether the presence of these chemicals in our bodies, particularly during critical phases of development, is associated with diseases?

Over 200 peer reviewed animal studies show that exposure to these chemicals during critical stages of development is associated with breast cancer, prostate cancer, insulin-resistance and diabetes, cardiovascular disease, birth defects, reproductive disorders, and learning and behavioral disorders such as autism-spectrum disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Third, is that the incidence of many serious and chronic diseases is on the rise. For example, childhood cancer increased more than 20% between 1975 and 1990¹. Breast cancer rates increased by more than 40% between 1973 and 1998², learning and developmental disabilities appear to be on the rise, now affecting one in six children in

¹ Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, *The Health Case For Reforming The Toxic Substances Control Act*, (2010), p. 5.

² *Id.* p. 7.

the U.S. under the age of 18³, rates of difficulty conceiving or maintaining pregnancies have increased 40% since 1982⁴, and testicular cancer has increased by 60% between 1973 and 2003 in the U.S. The rapid rise in incidence of these diseases cannot be attributed to improved diagnostics alone. In fact, early life exposure to these toxic chemicals is the number one suspect for the rise of many of these diseases.⁵ Recent concerns about the use of cadmium, a heavy metal more harmful than lead, in children's jewelry raises further support for H.B. 5314.⁶

Drs. Needleman and Landrigan, two noted researchers, stated that without knowing if exposure to these chemicals is safe, we are, by default, conducting a massive clinical toxicology trial, and our children and their children are the experimental animals."⁷ In nursing, we rely on scientific research and best evidence to inform and improve our practice. We also apply the precautionary principle which states "that when there is evidence of risk of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically"⁸

We should not continue to ignore the science. Sufficient evidence of harm exists both in animal research and in recent epidemiological studies. We should take precautionary steps now where safer alternatives are available. H.B. 5314 is common sense legislation aimed at preventing exposure of children to the most toxic chemicals, particularly cadmium.

CNA urges your support of H.B. 5314.

³ Id. p. 8.

⁴ Id. p. 12.

⁵ Environmental Working Group (2005) "*Body Burden: The Pollution in Newborns*" accessed at <http://www.ewg.org/reports/bodyburden2/part3.php>

⁶ See <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/WellnessNews/wireStory?id=9527916>

⁷ Herbert L. Needleman M.D., Philip J. Landrigan, M.D. (1994) "*Raising Children Toxic Free*"

⁸ Wingspread Statement (1998) accessed at: <http://www.gdrc.org/u-gov/precaution-3.html>.