



## State of Connecticut

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*Testimony of Representative Chris Perone of Norwalk  
Before the Select Committee on Children Raised Bill 5314, An Act Concerning Child  
Safe Products and Banning Cadmium in Children's Products*

Senator Musto, Representative Urban, and members of the Select Committee on Children, I would like to thank you for raising HB 5314, AN ACT CONCERNING CHILD SAFE PRODUCTS AND BANNING CADMIUM IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS.

The State of Connecticut has been a leader in preventing poisoning from and exposure to hazardous chemicals in children's products. In 2008, the General Assembly passed Public Act 08-106, An Act Concerning Child Product Safety, which prohibited the manufacture, distribution, and sale of any children's product that has been designated as a banned hazardous substance.

In the interest of time and clarity, I would like to address my remarks to section three of this bill. This section would prohibit the sale, manufacturing, and distribution of children's products that contain cadmium in the state of Connecticut.

Current state law bars packaging or any packaging component from being offered for sale or promotional purposes in this state, by its manufacturer or distributor, if it is composed of cadmium. (Sec. 22a-255i ) However, when it comes to the contents of such packaging, state law is silent. Specifically, there is no state law banning the use of cadmium in children's toys even in the face of growing evidence that it is an element considered to be as harmful as lead.

Cadmium is an extremely toxic, cancer-causing metal that has found its way into children's jewelry and other toys manufactured overseas. Prolonged exposure has been shown to lead to damage to the central nervous system and, in a recent study by the University of Cincinnati medical school, was shown to lower IQ more than lead. This is completely unacceptable. As any parent with very young children will tell you, infants

and toddlers explore their world by putting things in their mouths. And it is through this way that children can be exposed to continual low-level doses. By sucking or biting jewelry with high amounts of cadmium.

Meanwhile, there are many organizations and individuals who have weighed in the subject of cadmium. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission chairwoman recently advised parents not to allow young children to be given or to play with cheap metal jewelry due to concerns over cadmium. The Department of Health and Human Services ranks it 7<sup>th</sup> on its Priority List of 275 Hazardous Substances. - ahead of cyanide (28<sup>th</sup>) and asbestos (90<sup>th</sup>). The Centers for Disease Control has referred to cadmium as "poison" and the International Agency for Research on Cancer classifies cadmium as a group 1 human carcinogen - this category is used when there is sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in humans. And late last week, United States Representatives Larson and DeLauro signed on to co-sponsor legislation that would ban cadmium in toys for children under 12.

Additionally, several other states have moved in the direction of banning cadmium. The State of Washington has implemented a ban of children's products containing more than 0.004% cadmium; the State of California has also implemented a ban of various hazardous chemicals, including cadmium. States such as Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Jersey, and New York are currently considering cadmium legislation.

Despite this knowledge, due to lax enforcement overseas, cadmium is increasingly finding its way into children's toys in the US. Cutting corners and trimming costs have become even more critical to manufacturers in poorly regulated countries since the financial crisis sent purchase orders plummeting.

In the wake of a complete ban on lead, manufacturers began substituting 100% cadmium or, "zinc alloy" - an alloy that contains just a very small amount of zinc, and 80 to 90 percent cadmium, for lead in jewelry products, particularly in children's charm bracelets.

This issue isn't that complicated. When you break it down, there are three key things we know for certain: Cadmium is extraordinarily toxic. It is in our children's toys. And we are in a position to do something about it.

Thank you very much for this opportunity today and I urge the committee's favorable report.