

TESTIMONY RE: RAISED BILL 5130
AN ACT CONCERNING CHILD SAFE PRODUCTS
Committee on Environment
March 1, 2010

TO: Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee
FROM: Kathy Murphy, RN, MSN;
Environmental Nurse Consultant, Health Care Without Harm

Good morning Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 5130. I am Kathy Murphy, RN, MSN, a nurse with over 25 years of experience in acute care, primarily as a pediatric nurse in Connecticut. I speak in strong support of H.B. 5130, *The Child Safe Products Act*.

H.B. 5130 provides a much needed, comprehensive approach to protecting children from harmful chemicals in toys and other products. For the past 3 years, I have studied and taught environmental health to nursing students, other allied health professionals and private citizens across the state. I am increasingly concerned about the harmful effects of toxic chemicals found in so many consumer products, products we use every day. Though these chemicals have many useful functions, recent research shows that many of these chemicals that we are exposed to get into our system and bioaccumulate. A 2006 biomonitoring study on umbilical cord blood showed infants were born with over 200 chemicals that are known carcinogens, neurotoxins and endocrine-disruptors. These babies had barely taken a breath or a drink and already had toxic chemicals in their bodies.

A Center for Disease Control study showed that out of 2500 Americans tested, 93% had Bisphenol A (BPA) in their urine samples. BPA is a known hormone disruptor and is being linked with the significant increase rate of diabetes.

A recent biomonitoring study on twenty physicians and nurses showed that each participant had an average of twenty-four chemicals in their blood¹.

There is strong evidence that exposure to these chemicals, particularly during critical stages of development, are associated with development of breast and prostate cancers, attention deficit disorders and autism, insulin-resistance and type II diabetes, reproductive disorders including lowered sperm counts and infertility and impaired immune system function. Recent research also suggests links of exposure of more than one hundred industrial chemicals that are known to affect the human brain and nervous system, causing memory, cognitive and functional symptoms.²

During clinical practice, my students take care of many elderly patients with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. Recent studies on lead, aluminum, PCBs, pesticides, particulate air pollution and chemicals in solvents suggest that chemicals affecting the developing brain may be harming the aging brain as well leading to cognitive disorders such as Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's like symptoms.³ In the Naugatuck Valley, the area where I practice nursing, there are many former industrial plants may have exposed workers to these types of chemicals for years. As well, these chemicals may have entered the environment in discharges into the air and water-having the potential to effect each and every one of us.

H.B. 5130 *The Child Safe Products Act* is common-sense legislation that can reduce exposure to the most harmful toxic chemicals. While it is geared towards children's products, recent research shows that reduction in exposure may have long term implications as well. As a nurse, I urge support of H.B. 5130.

Sincerely,

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¹ Wilding, Bobbi Chase; Curtis, Kathy; Welker-Hood, Kristen; (2010) *Hazardous Chemicals In Healthcare: A Snapshot of Chemicals in Doctors and Nurses*, Physicians for Social Responsibility.

² Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, (2010) "*The Health Case for Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act.*" p. 10.

³ Ibid, p. 10.