

**Written Testimony of Laura G. Anderson, before the Connecticut General Assembly Environment Committee, February 23, 2010,
Testimony in Support of: SB 210 An ACT PROHIBITING THE USE OF BISPHENOL-A IN THERMAL RECEIPT PAPER AND INCREASING THE DUTIES OF THE CHEMICAL INNOVATIONS INSTITUTE.**

My name is Laura G. Anderson. I am a concerned parent, certified School Psychologist, and former participant in the Coalition's Biomonitoring project, "ISITINUS.org." The purpose of this writing is to support the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut legislative agenda to ban the use of a chemical called Bisphenol A (BPA) in ATM and cash register receipts.

If you are not familiar with BPA, you should be aware that it is a widely produced chemical which, when absorbed by the body acts as estrogen, potentially disrupting the natural functioning of one's endocrine system. Even at low doses, it has been associated with the development of many serious health problems, including, breast and prostate cancer, infertility (remember, miscarriages are "infertility"), thyroid disorders, and some developmental disorders in children.

In cash receipts, BPA, in a sort of powdery form, is used to prevent the bleeding of ink from paper. Handling receipts, which most of us do frequently, is exposing us to BPA because it is absorbed by the body through the skin, respiration and digestion. Employees who work with receipts are maximally exposed in this way. Further, since dollars and receipts are handled in close proximity to one another, BPA is also contaminating our money supply.

Almost 3 million tons of BPA are produced each year to be used in plastics, food can liners, receipts, and other products. When tested, about 95% of Americans show the presence of BPA in their blood stream. The odds are that you have BPA in your blood stream. In fact, you probably carry the burden of many chemicals in your body. Shockingly, several studies have found the presence of approximately 200 chemicals in the cord blood of today's average newborn. The problem is outdated, ineffective toxic chemical policies implemented almost 40 years ago. Because of these policies, we have allowed 80,000+ chemicals to be produced and released into our marketplace with little or no data required to show the safety of their long-term use.

Most people are unaware that it's not only the factory smoke down the street that's polluting us, it's the chemicals in products we bring into our homes and use every day. Some of these chemicals are absorbed into our dust from our furniture, fabrics and electronics and then we unknowingly breath them in. Some (e.g. personal care products) we absorb through our skin. Some we ingest from our food (e.g., BPA in the liners of canned food). It's hard to believe, as a parent, the absurdity that we have allowed so many chemicals to become pervasive in our daily lives, not knowing whether they are safe for our children or ourselves. What's wrong with this picture?

Many serious and debilitating health threats including, childhood cancers, asthma, infertility, developmental disabilities and some birth defects are on the increase. Since the 1990's, reported cases of autism spectrum disorder have increased. Research indicates that these numbers are not due only to more comprehensive diagnosis. The rise in autism coincides with the explosion of technology and the increase in the development and use of synthetic chemicals in our products. Again, many of these products expose us to toxic chemicals in our own environments.

While we can debate the role of chemical exposure as a cause in the development of autism and other developmental disabilities, when it comes to our children, we must move our policies toward erring on the side of caution by eliminating any potential causes. The fact is, we don't know what kind of effect these chemicals are having on us. We do know that 30 years of environmental health science have shown small amounts of some chemicals can have long-term effects when exposure comes at vulnerable times of development. For example, new studies have linked early life exposure to chemicals and the later diagnosis of breast and testicular cancer, learning and developmental disabilities, and Alzheimer's disease.

The good news is our state, Connecticut, has been a leader in making progress, albeit slow, toward improving environmental policies. In 2009, our legislature banned the use of BPA in food containers for children leading to the use of safer alternatives. By passing SB210, you are not only eliminating BPA exposure from cash receipts, but you are also taking a necessary step toward reforming our toxic chemical policy, and increasing the duties of the Chemical Innovations Institute to examine and submit information on the safety of chemicals to the legislature and Connecticut businesses and manufacturers. I urge you, for the health of our children and their future, please vote to pass SB210.

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