



INTERNATIONAL
SLEEP
PRODUCTS
ASSOCIATION

**Testimony of Christopher Hudgins
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Chairman Doyle, Taborsak and members of the Committee, my name is Chris Hudgins and I serve as Vice President for Government Relations and Policy for the International Sleep Products Association (ISPA). For nearly 100 years, our organization has served as the trade association for the mattress industry. We appreciate the opportunity to share our views today on House Bill 5858.

The purpose of House Bill 5858 is to combat the spread of bed bugs by requiring that used mattresses be inspected prior to sale. ISPA supports this approach but believes there are further actions that could be taken to address this problem.

The mattress industry has long supported efforts to combat bed bugs and educate consumers on how they can avoid bed bug contamination. One of the most prevalent sources of bed bugs is contaminated used or renovated mattresses. As bed bugs have reemerged as a pest control issue in recent years, the number of disposed mattresses containing these creatures has also increased. Oftentimes, used mattresses are not disposed of properly and are instead sold to unscrupulous mattress renovators who resell the product as new without sanitizing the mattress or disclosing that it is contaminated.

Further exasperating the bed bug problem is their incredible resiliency which allows them to spread easily. Bed bugs are able to live up to a year between feedings. They are also easily transferable. Having just one mattress with bed bugs in a facility could lead to the contamination of other products. As a result, a used or renovated mattress retailer selling one mattress with bed bugs is likely selling several mattresses with bed bugs. To truly hinder the spread of bed bugs, the unscrupulous used and renovated mattress problem must be addressed.

The state of Connecticut has previously taken important steps to help address this problem by enacting sanitization requirements for secondhand mattresses that are resold in the state. We support these efforts and applaud the state's leadership in this area. We also believe that requiring inspection of renovated mattresses for bed bugs as laid out in House Bill 5858 is a novel idea but, in the end, it may do too little to address the problem.

To further combat the spread of bed bugs, we suggest that the state strengthen its requirements for individuals that sell used or renovated mattresses. The most commonly recognized treatment for killing bed bugs and their eggs is heat treatment. The state

currently requires that all used mattresses be sanitized prior to resale using one of several sterilization methods. Among those methods are a process using boiling water and a process using heated air. The state should require that mattress renovators use at least one of these two heat treatment methods to sterilize renovated mattresses. Additionally, the regulations governing these requirements were promulgated in 1984 and they should be reviewed to consider whether the sterilization methods should be updated to reflect current practices.

Another issue that has presented itself in recent media reports is the difficulty regulators face in overseeing used and renovated mattress sellers who are based outside of Connecticut but sell product in the state. According to these reports, bad actors that are based in other jurisdictions have been able to operate in Connecticut with few repercussions. In order to address this issue and help ensure that used and renovated mattresses sold in the state are properly sanitized and do not contain bed bugs, we suggest that the state require that out of state used and renovated mattress sellers submit to an inspection of their facility at their cost. Such a requirement should be a prerequisite for obtaining a license to sell in the state. This practice will allow state employees to properly survey the practices at these facilities to determine whether they are meeting the requirements of Connecticut's bedding law.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our remarks. We look forward to continuing to work with you to address this expanding problem. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.