

Testimony for Public Hearing  
Environment Committee  
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**HB 5116: An Act Requiring the Labeling of Food Packaging that Contains Bisphenol-A**

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and other distinguished committee members, I want to thank you for this opportunity to address HB 5116.

I urge you to pass this important legislation to identify and label where Bisphenol-A (BPA) is in food packaging. I am a nurse, a graduate student in public health, and a mother of a 2 year old daughter. I am also pregnant with my second child. I am aware of the potential harm that BPA presents to both my daughter and my unborn child. Therefore, I do all I can to avoid exposure to it. And I am not alone; this concern is growing and is a hot topic among all mothers and women I speak to. I believe that this bill presents reform that is critical to the health of my family and I am proud to support it.

As a home care nurse, I am not only concerned about my own family's health but also the health and well-being of those I serve in the community. I recognize that the average citizen is unaware of the hidden exposures to toxic chemicals in their homes so it is my responsibility to advocate for them. Education and money alone cannot eliminate exposure to toxic chemicals like BPA. That is why it is so important that legislation be passed to protect ALL citizens from BPA by labeling our food packaging. This will begin to raise the public's awareness regarding this insidious exposure.

Bisphenol-A is used in many consumer products. BPA has been detected in canned and prepackaged food, polycarbonate bottles and even drinking water. It is used in the manufacturing of plastics and as a component of epoxy resins that line cans. In a recent 2010 study, it was determined that the main source of BPA exposure is through food (2, 5). BPA is thought to be present in 95% of the U.S. population (5). Knowing that BPA has been determined to be an endocrine disrupting chemical, the exposure from contact with these items is cause for consumer safety concern.

Connecticut has been successful in banning BPA from products made for infant and children. However, the concern remains that exposure through food is more detrimental to health; and is still unregulated. Sources of BPA contamination in our food and drink products include: cans, reusable containers—polycarbonate (PC), prepackaging, and plastic wrap. For pregnant women it can affect both the mother and the fetus. Research shows that a growing fetus is extremely susceptible to the toxic effects of this chemical, which can produce long term negative health effects once that child is born (1, 3). Also, for infants, BPA has been detected in both formula and breast milk (6). A recent study determined that when diets were restricted to food with limited packaging and increased fresh options, BPA exposures was reduced significantly (4). Choosing fresh foods is not always an option for people who live busy lives, have small children, or have low incomes but knowing what options are BPA free may encourage a reduction in exposure.

The U.S. government, in 2009, invested \$14 million in Recovery Act funds on BPA research. This investment was then supplemented by another \$30 million from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences for BPA specific research (7). In a time of economic distress, it is poignant that the government is willing to spend a significant amount of money on BPA research. While the US government continues to build its case against BPA, through more evidence based research, it is prudent that Connecticut's legislators take action and broaden restrictions on BPA in food packaging. Connecticut has the opportunity to once again be a leader on BPA reform and has a responsibility to its citizens to at least label BPA in food packaging so consumers can make educated decisions.

I hope that Connecticut will continue to champion legislation to protect my children, my patients and their families. Connecticut mothers and residents need your help to make the food we eat and the products we purchase, safe and healthy.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and your commitment to the health of Connecticut's residents. I urge your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Hacah Boros, RN, BSN

### **References**

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