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Testimony of Gretchen Raffa, Director, Public Policy & Advocacy
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, Inc

In support of

HB 5116 An Act Requiring Labeling of Food Packaging Containing Bisphenol-A (BPA)

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the Environment Committee, my name is Gretchen Raffa, from Planned Parenthood of Southern New England testifying in support of *HB 5116 An Act Requiring Labeling of Food Packaging Containing Bisphenol-A (BPA)*. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England's mission is to protect the right of all individuals to control their own fertility. Over the past decade new studies continue to demonstrate that environmental contaminants and exposure to chemicals can have a detrimental effect on one's reproductive health. As a trusted provider of women's health care to over 70,000 patients every year we are committed to educating ourselves and patients about the dangers and health risks from exposure to chemicals such as Bisphenol-A (BPA) for women and their families.

There is growing scientific evidence that shows some industrial chemicals, called hormone disruptors can cause serious risk for women's health such as infertility, breast cancer, polycystic ovarian syndrome, uterine fibroids, endometriosis, miscarriage and shortened lactation. BPA is a hormone disruptor which can mimic natural estrogen and what we are learning is that the timing and level of exposure can affect how a woman's body develops and functions. Studies demonstrate that the chemical is harmful at both low and high doses of exposure, and that the timing of exposure during critical windows of development—especially during fetal development—may cause irreversible and grave problems with the reproductive system both earlier and later in life.ⁱ Hazardous chemicals in everyday products such as cosmetics, personal care products cleaning products, our environments and in things we touch every day such as thermal paper receipts get into women's bodies, breast milk, and in the womb.

What research confirms is more women are experience difficulty in conceiving and maintaining a pregnancy, which affected 40% more women in 2002 than in 1982. The incidence of reported difficulty has almost doubled in younger women, ages 18-25^{ii,iii} There is evidence of a growing trend in the U.S. toward earlier breast development and onset of menstruation in girls. Studies suggest that endocrine-disrupting chemicals, particularly estrogen mimics are important factors associated with altered puberty timing.^{iv} Breast cancer rates in the U.S. have increased by more than 40% between 1973 and 1998. Today, a women's chance of getting a breast cancer diagnosis is 1 in 8 (up from 1 in 10 in 1973).^v Yet no chemicals are currently regulated under the Toxic Substances Control Act because of their potential harm to reproduction or development. But other authoritative bodies have listed more than 50 industrial chemicals as reproductive toxins.^v

Planned Parenthood of Southern New England is committed to promoting reproductive justice and we have long fought for a woman's right to control her reproductive destiny. We have a growing concern that the complexities of a woman's environment, including her physical geography, race, class, access to healthcare to name a few, can play a debilitating role on her fertility. This is why we have turned our attention to reproductive toxicants, such as BPA, that are affecting the ability of women to become pregnant, have a healthy pregnancy, and give birth to a healthy child.

Testing confirms that over 90% of our population carries BPA in their bodies and the time is now to reduce exposure to women, men and children. Thanks to the members of this committee, Connecticut has been a national leader in passing strong legislation to protect the health of children and the environment by phasing out lead, mercury and BPA but we cannot continue to ban one chemical at a time. We urge you to support HB 5116. We at Planned Parenthood of Southern New England believe this is an urgent matter of reproductive justice. All women should be guaranteed the right to control their own fertility, to bear healthy babies and live in safe and healthy communities. Thank you.

i Guttmacher Policy Review Winter 2010, Volume 13, Number 1 <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/gpr/13/1/gpr131810.html>

ii Anjani Chandra and Elizabeth Hervey Stephen, "Impaired Fecundity in the United States: 1982-1995," *Family Planning Perspectives*, 30, no 1, (1998): 34-42.

iii Kate Brett, "Fecundity in 2002 National Survey of Family Growth Women 15—24 Years of Age," Hyattsville, MD, National Center for Health Statistics (2008)

iv Susan W. Euling, et al., "Role of Environmental Factors in the Timing of Puberty." *Pediatrics*, 121, S3 (February 2008): S167-71.

v Safer Chemicals, Safer Families "The Health Case for Reforming TSCA" <http://healthreport.saferchemicals.org/>

vi California Environmental Protection Agency, "Proposition 65: The Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986," *Chemicals Known to the State to Cause Cancer or Reproductive Toxicity List as of September 11, 2009*