

**Bonhomme, Penny**

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**From:** Hurd, Lauren [lauren.hurd@yale.edu]

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 06, 2012 9:44 PM

**To:** PHC Testimony

**Subject:** Testimony on the Tanning Bill SB 54

**Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and Members of the Public Health Committee:**

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of Bill 54. My name is Lauren Hurd. I live in Hamden, Connecticut.

Tanning is big business. Throughout college, I tanned regularly with my friends until age 22 when I was diagnosed with malignant melanoma. I am now 25 years old and it has been three and a half years since I was told I had the deadliest form of skin cancer.

To say that the effects of tanning were gratifying would be an understatement; I was addicted. The psychological effect this drug had on me and continues to have on countless other people creates an undeniable dependence. I am sure many of you know and even love teenagers in your families. You likely also know that young people maintain the notion that they are invincible. I was one and I discovered the hard way how wrong I was. With support from all the scientific evidence available, we have the power to prevent others from making the same mistake. Connecticut needs to take a stand and help prevent young people from getting melanoma and other skin cancers caused by tanning.

Unfortunately, we live in a society where people are consumed with appearances and are willing to take drastic measures to achieve a certain level of "perfection." It is human nature to be more concerned with immediate results than long term ones. This holds true even more so when it comes to adolescents, who often tend to have little regard for their own health. The immediate results of tanning are that you get a nice glow and are happy with the way you look. The negative repercussions seem like some vague possibility that could present itself far in the future. However, I am here to stress the fact that this is an imminent threat to our youth. A deadly cancer that used to be found primarily in geriatric patients is now being seen in some as young as teenagers.

Statistics on the dangers of indoor tanning are compelling, with data from Yale, Harvard, and Dana Farber – all scientific communities we have come to trust to help us fight cancer. Strong data reveals an increased risk of melanoma and basal cell cancer from indoor tanning, but most concerning is the even higher risk for women and men exposed at a younger age. This is a direct contradiction to the false information provided regularly by the tanning industry.

Young minds can be easily influenced and need guidance. For this reason, the fact that the Bill bans anyone under eighteen from using tanning devices is vital to protecting the health of minors. If this had been the law when I began using tanning beds, it may very well have prevented me from getting melanoma.

As members of the Public Health Committee, please strongly consider helping to protect the youth of Connecticut, your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, by supporting Bill 54 banning use of indoor tanning beds under the age of 18.

Thank you,

Lauren Hurd  
March 7, 2012