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Testimony of Gretchen Raffa, Director, Public Policy & Advocacy
Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, Inc
In support of *SB 274--An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children.*

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Gretchen Raffa, from Planned Parenthood of Southern New England testifying in support of *SB 274 An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children.* 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 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. Chemicals like Bisphenol-A (BPA) is a hormone disruptor which can mimic natural estrogen and 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 get into women's bodies, breast milk, and in the uterus.

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.^{vi} With federal reform efforts not likely to pass anytime soon, SB 274 takes meaningful steps forward to identify chemicals of high concern and establishes a sustainable process to reduce exposure or give citizens much needed information. Taking meaningful steps to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals will ultimately reduce health care costs in CT.

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.

The time is now to reduce exposure to women, men and children. Connecticut is recognized as a leader and we should continue to pass legislation that moves toward a more comprehensive solution. SB 274 is a step in the right direction. This bill continues CT's leadership in protecting citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, from toxic chemicals. We urge you to support SB 274. 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.

Providing answers. Honoring choices. Creating hope.

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*