



377 Research Parkway, Suite 2-D
Meriden, CT 06450-7160
203-238-1207

TESTIMONY RE: H.B. 5218 AN ACT CONCERNING TOXIC FIRE RETARDANTS IN
CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS

Select Committee on Children Hearing
March 1, 2012

Good Afternoon Senator Gerrantana, Representative Urban and members of the Select Committee on Children.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut, and a founding partner of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut. I am Dr. Mary Jane Williams, past-president of the Connecticut Nurses' Association current chair of the Government Relations Committee and Professor Emeritus from CCSU.

I am providing testimony in strong support of H.B. 5218 AN ACT CONCERNING TOXIC
FIRE RETARDANTS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS

We don't know what the triggers are to the incidence of disease onset. As nurses we must therefore apply the Precautionary Principle "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of the activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of the proof. The process of applying the precautionary principle must be open, informed

The Connecticut Nurses' Association is a member of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut and Health Care Without Harm

and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must involve an examination of a full range of alternatives, including no action.”(Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle, Jan. 1998).

Therefore we must ask the ultimate questions:

What do we do with the knowledge we have related to these chemicals?

How do we apply the Precautionary Principle effectively to protect the public we serve?

We are asking that this Principle be applied and TDCPP, or Tris (1,3-dichloro-2-propyl) phosphate. TRIS was widely used in the 70’s in children’s pajamas, and then removed when it was discovered to be mutagenic. The chemical faded out of the spotlight until the 2000s, when a replacement was needed for the persistent toxic flame retardant penta-BDE. TDCPP is now one of the leading chemicals used to treat polyurethane foam for flame resistance, and by 2006 between 10 and 50 million pounds were produced or imported into the United States on a yearly basis. Sadly, the switch to TDCPP appears to have been more “out of the frying pan, into the fire” than a move from a toxic to safer chemical. TDCPP has not been thoroughly tested for health and safety, but the tests that have been conducted indicate that it is carcinogenic, may disrupt hormone levels, and may even be toxic to the nervous system. This chemical and many other associated with this industry are potentially harmful to children and their healthy development. (Health Hazards in the Nursery)

It is our responsibility to educate the public to make safe choices for themselves and their families and to advocate for good health. In order to advocate for good health we provide the public with the knowledge they need to make good choices. We must eliminate exposure to chemicals and their by-products.

Nurses are the largest group of health care providers nationally. Nursing practice focuses on prevention and wellness. Nursing has a socio-political responsibility to create

The Connecticut Nurses’ Association is a member of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut and Health Care Without Harm

social action that promotes the creation of a healthy environment. It is about protecting our children, the next generation and the public. "It is about the health of the public". The State of Connecticut through its elected officials must take action, ban these chemicals and work toward incorporation of safer alternatives.

Health Care is an expensive business. We as a state must look upstream and begin to develop legislation that will enhance the health of the public we serve in our state; this and only this development of sound "Preventive Health Legislation" will decrease the bottom line in our state budget.

Thank you for your time. We urge the committee to support this bill.

Mary Jane M. Williams PhD., RN