**Written Testimony of Anne Hulick, Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut, Before the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Children, February 21, 2013.**

Testimony in Support of:

**House Bill 6332,** AN ACT CONCERNING TOXIC FIRE RETARDANTS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS

Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and honorable members of the Committee on Children,

My name is Anne Hulick, RN, MS, JD and I am the Coordinator of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut (CSHC). I am also a nurse with many years of experience in environmental health. CSHC is a large coalition comprised of over fifty member organizations of health professionals, environmental justice advocates, labor groups, public health professionals, environmental experts, faith based groups, scientists and many individuals across Connecticut that are concerned about the growing body of research linking exposure to toxic chemicals with the rise in serious diseases. Toxic chemical exposure during critical windows of fetal development and to young infants and children is of particular concern.

Carcinogenic flame retardants have no place in children's products! Chlorinated Tris flame retardants, including TDCPP, TCEP and TCPP, are highly toxic chemicals added to the polyurethane foam of many products. Their presence is particularly worrisome in children's products. TDCPP was removed from children's pajamas in the 1970's when it was found to be mutagenic, meaning that it causes changes to DNA in the cells which can lead to cancers of the kidneys, liver and testicles. It is also a hormone disruptor and a neurotoxin. TCEP has been associated with increased cancers of the kidney, thyroid and leukemia. TCPP has not been fully studied but is structurally similar to TDCPP and TCEP.

Each of these chemicals off-gas and are commonly found in indoor air and in dust. Research studies show exposure to these chemicals from indoor air and dust is significant. Infants and young children have the highest exposures as they are often in close proximity or in direct contact with the products containing the foam. Exposure to these carcinogens at such a young age is particularly concerning as infants and young children's organs are still developing, even into adolescence.

Research also suggests that there is virtually no fire-safety benefit to the use of these chemicals.[1] Under the current California Flammability standard, TB 117, products containing polyurethane foam are subjected to a small open flame and slowed ignition for a period of seconds. However, since it is the foam and not the outer coating of fabric that is treated with these chemicals, the fabric in these products will ignite anyway. Once the fabric ignites, the large flames are not retarded by the presence of these toxic chemicals. Further, the chemicals released from the foam increase the toxicity of the smoke. Exposure to this toxic smoke has been linked to elevated levels of these toxic chemicals in the serum of firefighters as well. [2] Death or injury from fire is generally caused by smoke inhalation and not direct contact with flames. Deaths from fires have decreased as a result of less smoking in homes, fire-safe cigarettes and smoke detectors and not the presence of these harmful chemicals.

The Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut is very concerned about the rising incidence of childhood cancers. Cancer is the second leading cause of death for children under the age of twenty.[3] Leukemia, brain and other childhood cancers have increased by more than 20% since 1975. While we are doing a better job of treating these serious diseases and reducing mortality, a cancer diagnosis at any age, particularly in children, is devastating. Any opportunity to reduce exposure to toxic carcinogens, particularly for children, is critically important.

Thank you for this opportunity. We urge your support of HB 6332.

Sincerely,

Anne Hulick

Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut
645 Farmington Avenue, 3rd floor
Hartford, CT 06105
860-232-6232

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[1] Shaw, S; Blum, A; Weber, R; Kurunthachalam, K; Rich, D; Lucas, D; Koshland, C; Dobraca, D; Hanson, S; Birnbaum; "Halogenated Flame Retardants: Do the Fire Safety Benefits Justify the Risks?" Reviews on Environmental Health Vol. 25, No. 4; (2010).

[2] Shaw, S; Bergeer, M; Harris, J; Yun, S. Wu, Q; Liao, C; Blum A, Stefani, A, Kannan, K; "Persistent organic pollutants including polychlorinated and polybormiantted debenzo-p-dioxins and dibensofurans in firefighters in Northern California" Chemosphere (2013) http://dx.doi.org/10/1016/j.chemosphere.2012.12.070.

[3] Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, "The Health Case for Reforming the Toxic Substances Control Act" Jan. 2010, p. 5.