

**Written Testimony of Nurses from the Class Human Health Experience at
Western Connecticut State University, Waterbury, CT
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,

This testimony is coming from 50 nurses, mothers and grandmothers enrolled in nursing class: Human Health Experience at Western Connecticut State University. As nurses we have with strong dedication to global issues that impact human health and wellness across life span. We are aware that toxic chemical exposure during critical fetal development and to young infants and children is of particular concern.

As a whole, when USA is working on increasing preventive and wellness services to improve health of our nation, we are neglecting to protect children's health during innocent time playing with their toys, sleeping in cribs and wearing adorable clothes. This innocent exposure endangers their entire life and increases costs of health care in the future when they are dealing with variety of long term effects

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 banned 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 Rather, the decrease in smoking inside, fire-safe cigarettes and smoke detectors are the reasons that fire-related deaths have diminished. In ignition tests, these carcinogenic flame retardants delayed ignition for only 7-12 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. Death or injury from fire is generally caused by smoke inhalation and not direct contact with flames. The chemicals released from the foam increase the toxicity of the smoke.

We are very concerned about the rising incidence of childhood cancers. Cancer is the second leading cause of death for children under the age of twenty.² 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

The children are our future and it is our responsibility to protect their health. As nurses, mothers and grandmothers our primary concern is promotion of health and wellbeing of our community. **We urge you to support and work to assure that HB 6332 pass this session.**

Highly disturbed,

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns, nurses from the class Human Health Experience at WestConn.

Respectfully,

Melissa Beecher, Debbie Bernier, Heather Calvanese; Jamie Dery; Kimmie Cuningham; Jamie Dance; Valbona Dermaku, Sovet Howard; Daniele Eason; Juliann Johnson; Dikla Kluger, Rosemary Lovallo; John Schiller, Lisa Simoes; Ana Sousa; Monica Zinke; Bertha Mambwe; Lisa McCarty; Gail Moutinho; Colleen Peppin; Deboarch Piccione; Elna Porecenat; Vecky Reyes; Robin Bacon; Renta Bundy; Cineas Kerens; Jocelyn Crespo; Nadja Davis; Debra Debiase; JoEllen Dzamko; Dayna Giordano, Geri Gleason; Donna Duilmetti; Kayla King; Rilinda Korumi; Jill Lincoln; Irene Matos; Erika Moley; Lillith Moreno; Ana Quintana; Jeanne Ronewicz; Vivianna Rua; Dianna Taraskewich; Sandra Trevino; Supatida Tuanthel; Kris Vegas; Senzoga Kabera;

Nurses from Human Health Experience (Nur 336) and
Bozena M. Padykula, PMHNP-BC, APRN, MSN, RN, AHN-BC
Assistant Professor, Dept. Of Nursing
Western Connecticut State University
181 White St. Danbury CT 06810
(203)837-3905; Danbury office

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

(203) 596-8790 Waterbury office
(860)989-3464 Cell
padykulab@wcsu.edu