Written Testimony of Jose Perez, RN
For the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Children,
February 21, 2013
In Support of HB 6332,
AN ACT CONCERNING TOXIC FIRE RETARDANTS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS

My name is Jose Perez, and I am a resident of Southington, a parent, a nurse and a former volunteer firefighter.

I write in SUPPORT of HB 6332 An Act Concerning Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products. This bill would ban chlorinated tris flame retardants, including TDCCP, TCEP and TDCPP. Both TCEP and TDCPP have recently been listed by the California EPA as mutagenic and possible human carcinogens. TCEP is no longer produced in Europe and is under consideration to be banned in Canada. TDCPP was banned from children's pajamas in the 1970's when it was found to be a probable human carcinogen. Research shows that it may also disrupt hormone levels and is likely neurotoxic. Despite this it is found in many children's products including nursing pillows, changing pads, and bassinettes at concentrations of up to 5 percent by weight. These chemicals off-gas and get into the air and house dust, causing further exposure.

Furthermore, there is no significant fire safety benefit to the use of these chemicals. The current standard uses a "small flame test." The presence of these chemicals delays ignition of the foam by only a few seconds when exposed to a small flame. Studies show that the standard is not effective because the fabric covering the foam is not treated so it ignites anyway. Once ignited, large flames quickly ignite the foam. In most fatal fires, smoke inhalation is the cause of death rather than the fire itself. The increase of chemicals used in furniture and plastics have made the smoke extremely toxic when these items burn. This increases the risks to firefighter as well as to the residents.

How it is possible that we have found a chemical to be of such high concern that we banned it from children's pajamas but left it in items that children sleep, play and nurse on?

To me, this indicates not a lack of intent, but a lack of the proper tools to allow us to make the needed changes in our regulations in order to protect the most vulnerable of our population. Because the Federal Toxic Substances Control Act is so weak, and Congress has yet to act to reform this broken law, there are many failures to protect our youth. This is a tragic situation which we can begin to address here in Connecticut. I am proud that our state legislators have chosen to be leaders in banning some of the most egregious chemicals from children's products and I hope that they will continue to move toward a safer, healthier Connecticut by passing HB 6332 this session.

Thank you.

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