

**Written Testimony of Karen Wexell, RN, MSN of Clinton, CT,
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Select Committee on Children,
February 21, 2013**

Testimony in Support of:
**HB 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 Karen Wexell and I am a resident of Clinton, CT. I write in strong support of HB 6332 An Act Concerning Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products.

I am the mother of 2 children, a Board Certified Holistic nurse, a Certified Specialist in Poison Information. I work at the CT Poison Control Center and as adjunct faculty at the University of CT School of Nursing and Sacred Heart University. I am Co Founder of the Central CT Chapter of the American Holistic Nurses Association.

I am very concerned about the growing body of evidence linking exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products to the rising incidence of many serious diseases including childhood brain cancer and leukemia, reproductive disorders, learning and behavioral disorders including ADHD and autism-spectrum disorder. Cancer is now the 2nd leading cause of death among people under the age of 20 in the United States, and autism-spectrum disorder now effects 1 in 88. What is going on?

There is growing consensus among the scientific and medical community that toxic chemicals in products we use every day is playing a role. I am shocked to find toxic fire retardants are present in so many children's products. These chemicals are known carcinogens and have no place in products that children use or sleep on. I am also very aware that recent studies show that these chemicals offer no significant fire safety benefit and actually increase the toxicity of the smoke when the product ignites. Injury and death from fire is usually the result of smoke inhalation long before contact with flames.

I am aware the expense of purchasing organic and chemical free products is cost prohibitive not only to myself but also families of lower income. I feel strongly it is my responsibility to be the voice for all children and parents and urge you to acknowledge and act to prevent the unnecessary health burdens these toxic chemicals place on our children.

There is no benefit to having these toxic chemicals in children's products. I applaud members of the Children's committee for raising this important issue and will be following it closely. I urge passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Karen Wexell, RN, MSN
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