

**Written Testimony of Lewis Head, MLT, Student Nurse of 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 Lewis Head and I am a resident of Ledyard, CT. I write in strong support of HB 6332 An Act Concerning Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products.

I am the father of three children, a health educator and student nurse. I am also an ASCP registered laboratory technician.

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 affects 1 in 88 children. Carcinogenic flame-retardants have no place in children's products. I am very concerned about the growing body of scientific and medical evidence linking exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products to the rising incidence of many serious diseases. 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 including childhood brain cancer and leukemia, reproductive disorders, learning and behavioral disorders including ADHD and autism-spectrum disorder. What am I doing about this at home?

When my wife and I found out we were having a baby we began to look into products that would promote the best health and welfare for her. Shortly before her birth we found out she had a heart defect. We became even more vigilant in our determination to find products that would keep her healthy in her fragile state as a new born with a cardiac defect. One of the most important pieces for anyone, especially children is a good bed. Almost all the mattresses made at this current time have a foam core that is treated with the same flame retardant chemicals we are trying to have banned. 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. What can a parent do to protect their infant from these cancer-causing agents? My wife and I spent many days searching for a solution and found our solution on the other half of the world. Australia sells a special cover that keeps all the chemicals in the mattress while providing comfort for the infant. Our daughter was able to benefit from this cover but it was not cheap. This is not a practical solution for everyone due to socioeconomic factors.

Many 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. Injury

and death from fire is usually the result of smoke inhalation long before contact with flames. This is a case where the cure is worse than the disease.

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 the assembly to pass legislation to protect our children.

Sincerely,

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