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TESTIMONY RE: TESTIMONY RE: Raised Bill No. 981 AN ACT CONCERNING PESTICIDES ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN

March 5, 2013

Good Afternoon, Co-Chairs, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and esteemed members of the Select Committee on Children. I want to thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), as a founding partner of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut. I am Mary Jane Williams Ph.D., RN current chairperson of Government Relations Committee for the Connecticut Nurses Association and professor emeritus from Central Connecticut State University. I am also a founding member of the National Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments and currently serve on the Steering Committee.

I speak in strong support: **Raised Bill No. 981 AN ACT CONCERNING PESTICIDES ON SCHOOL GROUNDS**

We don't know what the triggers are to the incidence of disease onset. However, we are beginning to develop a strong body of scientific knowledge that establishes cause and effect. However until we have multiple well- grounded research studies, we need to apply the Precautionary Principle which states "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically." In this context the proponent of the activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of the proof. The process of applying the precautionary principle must be open, informed and democratic and must include

potentially affected parties. It must involve an examination of a full range of alternatives, including no action.”(Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle, Jan. 1998).

The Connecticut Nurses Association supports this bill that would extend the ban on lawn care pesticides to all School settings that provide care for children up to grade 12. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency information provides the reasons why this is so important.

Kids Need Protection

<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/factsheets/kidpesticide.htm>

Children are at a greater risk for some pesticides for a number of reasons. Children's internal organs are still developing and maturing and their enzymatic, metabolic, and immune systems may provide less natural protection than those of an adult. There are "critical periods" in human development when exposure to a toxin can permanently alter the way an individual's biological system operates. Children may be exposed more to certain pesticides because often they eat different foods than adults. Children's behaviors, such as playing on the floor or on the lawn where pesticides are commonly applied increase their chances of exposure to pesticides.

Adverse effects of pesticide exposure range from mild symptoms of dizziness and nausea to serious, long-term neurological, developmental and reproductive disorders. Americans use more than a billion pounds of pesticides each year to combat pests on farm crops. Our children across the lifespan are exposed unnecessarily to lawn pesticides from very early ages through their College years by engaging in supposedly healthy athletics on Fields contaminated with pesticides.

Our “lack of action” as a State has a direct impact on the children in our communities and their families in the immediate and long term. Chronic illness that is a result of long-term cancer treatment is traumatic for the child, family and result in long-term costs for health care. We are asking that the “Precautionary Principle” be applied and that Connecticut be proactive in banning hazardous chemicals, which are found in an array of children’s product. All of these

pesticides are potentially harmful to children and their healthy development. Extending the ban on pesticides on school grounds is essential to the health of our children.

It is our responsibility to educate the public to make safe choices for themselves and their families and to advocate for good health. In order to advocate for good health we must eliminate exposure to pesticides on our school grounds. Nurses are the largest group of health care providers nationally. Nursing practice focuses on prevention and wellness. This legislation is about protecting our children, the next generation and the public. "It is about the health of the public".

Thank you for your time. We strongly urge the committee to vote favorably to support
Raised Bill No. Raised Bill No. 981 AN ACT CONCERNING PESTICIDES ON SCHOOL GROUNDS

Thank you

Mary Jane M. Williams PhD., RN