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Testimony of Tom Nicholas
Manchester Teacher
Treasurer, Connecticut Education Association

Before The Children's Committee

Regarding Raised Bill No. 981 'An Act Concerning Pesticides on School Grounds'
March 5, 2013

Chairperson Bartolomeo and Chairperson Urban, Senator Linares, Representative Betts and members of the Children Committee, my name is Tom Nicholas. I am a Manchester teacher and I also serve as Treasurer of the Connecticut Education Association.

I come before you today to testify in support of Raised Bill 982 An Act Concerning Pesticides on School Grounds. The Center for Disease Control has documented clearly that pesticides at schools have been associated with illness among students and employees. Children are particularly susceptible to pesticide toxicity because many of their organ systems are not yet mature. The frontal lobe of the brain does not mature until the early 20's. Let us not expose our students or school staff to chemicals unnecessarily.

If districts were to develop and use Integrated Pest Management Programs which focuses on withholding food sources to the pests in question, there would not be the need for pesticides.

With regard to maintaining great playing fields, we should be implementing the use of organics. Branford school system has been using organics for years to treat their playing fields. Using the fall leaf collection to create their compost, Branford has found that the fields have healthier root systems and it is more cost effective than pesticide applications.

I ask that you extend through our high school grade level buildings the same protections and benefits we provide for our younger children. Pesticides affect us all not just the little ones.

Thank you very much.