

**Written Testimony of Karen Owen MSN, RN, NCSN of Guilford, 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 Owen. I am a resident of Guilford, CT. I write in strong support of HB 6332 An Act Concerning Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products.

I am the mother of one child, the aunt of 18 nieces and nephews and as a school nurse and long time activist for raising awareness on the health impacts of exposure to toxic chemicals in every day products. I am extremely concerned that while polybrominated diphenyl ethers were voluntarily removed from children's pajamas in the 1970's due to being carcinogenic and mutagenic, we now find out that similar fire retardant chemicals are present in so many other children's products.

It is time we stopped exposing our most vulnerable to these harmful chemicals. Biomonitoring studies done on young children have shown levels of harmful flame retardants high enough to cause thyroid disruption and other diseases in lab animals. (see CNN Planet in Peril—body burden).

In 2007, I participated in a bio-monitoring project, along with others from Connecticut and across the country. I was horrified to learn that despite trying to make good choices, 17 out of the 21 chemicals tested were found in my body (isitinus.org), I had the most of all of the participants in this project!

Infants and young children have higher rates of exposure to chemicals due to their close proximity to products like changing pads, bassinette mattresses, nursing pillows and frequent hand-mouth behavior. They are also more vulnerable as they breathe in more air, pound for pound, than adults and do not have fully developed systems to metabolize and excrete these chemicals like adults. And I know from personal experience, even adults don't excrete the toxic chemicals they are exposed to on a daily basis.

We must take every step possible to reduce exposure to toxic carcinogens in our most vulnerable and most precious of humans, our children!

I applaud the members of the Committee on Children for raising this important issue and urge you to support its passage this session.

Sincerely,

Karen

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