Testimony of
Joseph Piechta, President
of the Administrative and Residual Employees Union
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Children
in support of HB 126
An Act CONCERNING CHEMICALS OF HIGH CONCERN TO CHILDREN

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and honorable members of the Committee on Children: My name is Joseph Piechta and I am the President of the Administrative and Residual Employees Union. I am testifying in support of HB 5354, An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children.

I support HB 5354 because it begins a process in Connecticut for identifying and listing chemicals that are linked to increasing health issues in children such as leukemia, and other cancers, reproductive disorders, autism, and learning disabilities by instructing the Department of Public Health to create a list of the most egregious chemicals.

Since the passage of the Federal Toxic Substances Control Act in the 1970's only a small number of chemicals have been identified and regulated as toxins, yet by 2007 the International Agency for Research on Cancer had identified 415 known or suspected carcinogens. Although research will never be able to unravel the complicated tangle of all the causes of cancer, it has demonstrated thru the years that reducing exposure to certain chemicals reduces the rate of certain cancers. Perhaps one of the most common examples is the decreasing rate of lung cancer in men from the reduction in smoking. Another example that is less widely known is the decline in bladder cancer among workers whose exposure to aromatic amines was eliminated.

As President of A&R, I am very concerned with the health and welfare of its members and I know that workers are often disproportionately exposed to those chemicals that ultimately end up in the products used by all of us as consumers, and by our children. I believe that HB 5354 is ultimately a step in the right direction because it will focus on those of us who are most likely to be affected by toxic chemicals. Although I do believe that it is a large step in the right direction, I hope that ultimately it will lead to a path of responsible research and development for all those chemicals impacting us in our homes and our work environments.

Sincerely,
Joseph Piechta, President
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