

**Testimony of Gladys Ellis of Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice and North  
Hartford Seniors in Action**

**Before the Connecticut General Assembly Committee on Children**

**March 6, 2014**

**Testimony in support of HB 5354 To require the Commissioner of Public Health to identify chemicals potentially harmful to children and report to the public health committee concerning such chemicals.**

**First I wish to thank all the members of the Committee on Children for the opportunity to give testimony today.**

**My name is Gladys Ellis and I am the President of North Hartford Seniors in Action and a proud member of Connecticut Coalition for Environmental Justice. I speak today in support of HB 5354 , an act to require the Commissioner of Public Health to identify chemicals potentially harmful to children and report to the public health committee concerning such chemicals. This legislation would have the Department of Public Health identify chemicals of concern to children and make recommendations for action every 2 years, without any additional allocation from the state budget.**

**Chemicals of high concern have been found in mats that children use, some toys and baby bottles. It is urgent we act upon this. We see higher and higher cancer rates among children, higher autism rates and higher and higher asthma rates. Study after study links many of the toxic chemicals children are exposed to in everyday products to these health problems. Children are, in fact, among the most vulnerable to the negative health effects of toxic chemicals that are found in everyday products.**

**The City Council of Hartford has gone on record as calling for comprehensive legislation to address the issue of toxic chemicals in children's products. This resolution points to the concern that common ingredients in plastics and toys have been shown to disrupt hormone systems, harm child brain and sexual development and impair long-term memory. The resolution also points to concerns that common ingredients in personal care products have been linked to cancer, birth defects reproductive damage.**

**When every day products are incinerated in Hartford, the toxins are released into our air. These air borne toxins also contribute to the high rate of asthma and other problems in our neighborhoods. Thus members of my family and community suffer from exposure to these toxins by the air we breathe as well in the products we use.**

**We should not take chances with the health of our children. We have the right to know what chemicals are in the products we buy for our children. HB 5354 will inform us about the presence of chemicals in children's products and the risk these chemicals pose.**