

Children Committee
Public Testimony
March 6, 2014

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF SB 46 AN ACT CONCERNING PESTICIDES ON
SCHOOL GROUNDS

Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, Senator Linares, Representative Betts and esteemed members of the Children Committee,

As the head baseball coach at Nathan Hale-Ray High School the past 15 years, I encourage you to vote **NO** for the Act Concerning Pesticides on School Grounds. In fact, myself and many others, would like to see the initial act repealed. Fields and grounds around the State are suffering.

Currently our middle school fields (soccer, baseball, softball and the grounds in general) are in a shambles. Grubs, moles/voles, ants and other pests have kept the soil from the proper nutrients to grow strong healthy grass. The fact is the only thing that sustains growth are weeds. Organic fertilizers and pest controls have not worked and are in most cases two or three times the cost. What grass we have is not strong enough to sustain the rigors of a sports season. It becomes a safety hazard for players. Balls take odd and inconsistent hops, the terrain doesn't have consistent traction for players to run, move laterally, and alter their paths during the flow of practice and games, and it doesn't have the proper cushion for when players fall or make an aggressive attempt.

Having been on the building committee for that school I'm sure you're quite proud of the layout and design of the field complex of Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, but the fields themselves have a long way to go to come close to match the beautiful surroundings.

Killingworth has had the same issue with their fields as well. In fact, theirs has got so bad they had to rip it up and start anew, but those who have firsthand knowledge feel it's going to go down the same path.

Our high school fields are not only used by the school but the community at large. Currently the grass grows in green and lush – quite playable. Because of their heavy use, by the end of seasons, they do get worn, but are able to recover. My fear, and I believe it is easily justified by how many middle and elementary school fields across the State have been ruined, is that over time the high school fields will go down the same path and become a safety hazard for student athletes and an eye sore.

Again I encourage you to vote NO.

Thank You for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Rich Gable

Teacher and Head Baseball Coach at Nathan Hale-Ray High School