

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee, (in particular, Representative Miller, as I heard you speak this morning at the Middlesex Coalition for Children's Legislative breakfast)

Thank you for supporting HB 5330, An Act Concerning the Application of Pesticides at Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields and Municipal Grounds. It is an important and necessary additional step forward to protect the health of all children in Connecticut. Currently, state law does not allow lawn care pesticides on school grounds K-8. This bill will extend that ban of these toxic chemicals to all public areas, where our children can still be involuntarily exposed despite the known health risks.

There are compelling reasons not to allow lawn care pesticides on public grounds. Numerous studies have linked the 30 commonly used lawn pesticides with serious health effects, including 19 studies linking these pesticides with cancer, 13 with birth defects, 21 with reproductive effects, and 15 with neurotoxicity or abnormal brain development. Other studies have linked these pesticides with hyperactivity, developmental delays, behavioral disorders and motor dysfunction. Children are particularly vulnerable due to their rapidly developing bodies. When pesticides are applied, children can be exposed when they walk on or play in the grass. The pesticides can also be tracked inside the schools (and our homes), where they can persist for long periods of time, exposing children even if they were not in contact with the grass.

Given the overwhelming evidence, **why would we put our children's health at risk for cosmetic reasons?**

There are safe, effective and affordable alternatives to these toxic pesticides for both grounds and fields. Lawns and fields can be maintained to the highest of standards without the use of dangerous chemicals. It may be a different way of doing business for typical municipal grounds employees and landscapers and require retraining, but safe, proven methods do exist and many municipalities have made the switch successfully, including Branford and Cheshire. Our friends in New York have a state law that bans lawn care pesticides on all schools, providing numerous examples of beautiful turfs maintained organically.

Considering there are so many unknowns and so much plausible evidence about the dangers of these chemicals, it seems unconscionable to continue to expose our children to these risks. CT made the important step of protecting its younger school children, but now it is time to protect all our children as well.

Thank you!  
-Monica Belyea

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