



Testimony of Anne Hulick, RN, MS, JD;
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Before the CT General Assembly's Public Health Committee, February 28, 2014

Testimony in support of SB 126, An Act Concerning Children's Exposure to Chemicals

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I speak in support of SB 126, An Act Concerning Children's Exposure to Chemicals.

My name is Anne Hulick, and I am the Co-Director of CT Clean Water Action and the Coordinator of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut (Coalition). I am also a nurse with many years of experience in environmental health. The Coalition is a large advocacy organization comprised of over fifty-five member organizations of health professionals, environmental justice advocates, labor groups, public health professionals, environmental experts, faith based groups, scientists and many individuals across Connecticut that are concerned about the growing body of research linking exposure to toxic chemicals with the rise in serious diseases. Toxic chemical exposure during critical windows of fetal development and to young infants and children is of particular concern.

The Coalition strongly supports SB 126. I appreciate the opportunity to outline 4 reasons for our support of this bill.

I) We have a right to know what is in products we purchase!

We've learned a lot about the unintended consequences of toxic chemicals in consumer products. Research over the last 30 years strongly links exposure to toxic chemicals from products with the rising incidence of diseases, particularly in children.¹ Analyses of umbilical cord blood of babies born in the U.S. shows the presence of an average of over 200 industrial chemicals, pesticides and chemicals known to be carcinogenic and neurotoxic and disruptive to the endocrine system.² There is growing consensus that exposure to toxic chemicals in consumer products, particularly for children, is the #1 suspect for the rise in many serious diseases including the following:

¹ Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, "*Chemicals and Our Health: Why Recent Science Is A Call To Action*" (2012), p. 3. available at: <http://healthreport.saferchemicals.org/>

² Available at: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=newborn-babies-chemicals-exposure-bpa>

- Leukemia and other childhood cancers have increased by more than 20% since 1975
- One in two men and one in three women will get a cancer diagnosis.
- Cancer is now the 2nd leading cause of death for people under the age of 20!
- Breast cancer incidence rose more than 40% between 1973 and 1988. Currently, invasive breast cancer is affecting young women at an alarming rate. One in eight women will get a breast cancer diagnosis
- Asthma incidence doubled between 1980 and 1995 and continues to rise, affecting 12 million Americans.
- Reproductive disorders including difficulty conceiving and maintaining a pregnancy affected 40% more women in 2002 than in 1982, particularly those aged 18-25.
- Learning and developmental disorders including autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder affect nearly one in six children in the U.S! In the last 20 years, the prevalence of autism increased by 300%.³

In fact, just last week, research published in Lancet Neurology, a medical journal, called the extreme rise in impaired brain development of infants and young children “*a global silent pandemic*” and urged that precautionary measures be taken to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals.⁴

II) Federal reform of TSCA is not likely to happen soon.

While efforts to reform the Toxic Substances Control Act are underway, meaningful reform is not likely to happen anytime soon. Under this current law, approximately 62,000 chemicals were grandfathered into place with no safety testing. Approximately 84,000 chemicals now exist and still, only about 5% have been required to be safety tested and of these, only 5 have been fully regulated in consumer products. Since the time TSCA was enacted, our understanding of the health impacts of exposure to these chemicals has advanced significantly. There is general consensus that our exposure to toxic chemicals in products is very likely contributing to the rise of many serious diseases in this country. Household cleaners, plastics, children’s products and many other every day products have been found to contain over 70 chemicals of very high concern.⁵ Dr. Landrigan, a noted physician and researcher on the health impacts of exposure to chemicals in products, stated “Since 1950, over 70,000 chemicals have been invented and dispersed into the environment. Only a fraction of these have been tested for human toxicity. We are, by default, conducting a massive clinical toxicology trial and our children and their children are the experimental animals.”⁶

³ See <http://healthreport.saferchemicals.org/> at p. 3.

⁴ http://download.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lanneur/PIIS1474442213702783.pdf?id=aaaGMazCz_6mj9HR5g0ru

⁵ The Center for International Environmental Law, “*Driving Innovation: How stronger laws help bring safer chemicals to market.*” (2013), p.4.

⁶ Herbert L. Needleman MD, Philip Landrigan MD, “*Raising Children Toxic Free*” (1994)



Under TSCA, the federal government is unable to regulate a chemical unless it proves that the chemical poses an *unreasonable risk to health*. In fact, under TSCA, the U.S. EPA was unsuccessful in their attempt to regulate asbestos, a known human carcinogen, because they were unable to meet this burden of proof when sued by the chemical industry.

III) The Chemical Innovations Institute was not intended to do this.

The Chemical Innovations Institute was established in 2010 to “provide assistance to businesses, state agencies and non-profit organizations **that seek** to utilize alternatives to chemicals that are harmful to public health and the environment.” The Institute was **not** intended to serve in a regulatory capacity or to guide state or federal chemical policy. The Institute also was not funded by the state. There remains an important role for government to enact policies that protect health.

IV) We should put public health and the health of children first.

This bill is simple! It provides a report, information based on science that you can use to guide policies to protect public health. The Department of Public Health supports this bill. It will cost the state nothing. It will provide consumers with information that they increasingly demand. We believe parents and all citizens have a right to know if there are harmful chemicals in products!

Thank you for this opportunity. We urge your support of SB 126.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne B. Hulick".

Anne Hulick