

**Testimony on behalf of
Tracey Scraba, JD, MPH
in support of
Senate Bill 126 – AAC Children’s Exposure to Chemicals
Public Health Committee
Friday, February 28, 2014**

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and distinguished members of the General Assembly’s Public Health Committee,

I thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of **Senate Bill 126 – An Act Concerning Children’s Exposure to Chemicals**, a bill that focuses on reducing toxic chemical exposure for children. As the former President of the Connecticut Public Health Association and the mother of two toddlers, I feel compelled to weigh in on the importance of the Connecticut Legislature taking action on this issue.

As Past President of the Connecticut Public Health Association, I strongly believe that protecting public health is vital toward maintaining a healthy citizenship. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines public health as “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through organized community efforts” and this legislation does just that by taking an important step toward reducing our youngest and most vulnerable citizens’ exposure to potentially toxic chemicals.

As a new mother, I want only the best for my children and even more importantly, I believe my responsibility while they are still young is to protect them from harm. This has been made increasingly difficult since when we are selecting items from a store shelf for our families, we are for all intents and purposes “buying blind.” Words such as “natural,” “gentle” and “safe” seem to be used more as marketing tools and less often to accurately describe the actual items on the shelves.[1,2] Deceptive marketing, insufficient, and more importantly, unintelligible information on product labels makes parenting more difficult than ever.

When one takes a moment to consider the magnitude of physical and cognitive development that the human body experiences from the moment of conception through young adulthood, there is very little room for error. With cells rapidly multiplying and changing, the introduction of environmental toxins has been shown in peer-reviewed studies to negatively impact this development – in the form of many serious illnesses, reproductive and developmental disorders.[3,4] I am strongly in support of this legislation that would set up a process for the Department of Public Health to begin monitoring the most egregious of the toxic chemicals that are regularly found in products marketed for children and that have been shown to have a negative impact on human health.

There are more than 80,000 chemicals used in commerce today, some of which are used in the manufacturing of our children's toys and other products.[5] With no laws that require they be tested for safety before being used, our children are being exposed everyday to substances that very well could be harmful to their health and their development.[6] In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development coined a term "Precautionary Principle," which cautions that if something is potentially harmful or dangerous, then restraint should be used.[7,8] With studies having already linked some of these very chemicals with serious illnesses – I ask you to enlist the Precautionary Principle and support this legislation to protect our children's health. I thank you for your time.

References:

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4. www.scientificamerican.com/article/bpa-exposure-linked-to-prostate-ca
5. Summary of the Toxic Substances Control Act/Laws and Regulations/US EPA." *US Environmental Protection Agency*. N.p., 11 Aug. 2011. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL31905.pdf>
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