

**Testimony of Theresa Velenzas Before the Connecticut General Assembly of
Committee on the Environment
March 17, 2014**

Senator Meyer, Representative Gentile, co-Vice Chairs, Ranking Members, and honorable members of the Committee on Children. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting SB 443 an Act Concerning Pesticides on School Grounds, Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields and Municipal Greens.

I write to you as a concerned mother of two and a member of this community. It is my hope that you will be able to pass this bill out of committee and send it along its way to become law. Briefly, some reasons follow.

It is unacceptable to me that while we as a community KNOW pesticides cause cancer, respiratory problems, neurotoxicity, birth defects, hyperactivity and a whole host of other long- term health problems, as well as death - we still use them. It is unacceptable that knowing all this, we have to go through a legislative process to argue whether or not we should be using these chemicals in places where children are repeatedly exposed. Poison causes illness and / or death. It's scientifically proven and even on the labels of the very products being used.

We know children play in parks. They go to school and spend a lot of time in athletic fields and municipal greens. They enjoy picnics, and rolling around in the grass, often times with pets that bring these toxic chemicals into the home. The environmental impact is far reaching, affecting water, classrooms, and the home while the toxicity of these chemicals can persist for long periods of time. The effects of current exposure can take several years to develop. We must stop, now.

On this day I am especially hopeful in submitting testimony because of the new language proposed by Senator Williams in collaboration with Senator Meyer to ban Genetically Modified (GM) grass from our beautiful state. GM grass would create an ENVIRONMENTAL DISASTER and contaminate our land irreparably. Pesticides pollute. GM grass pollutes AND reproduces itself to spread. We must preempt this now, before we find ourselves with the task of cleaning up another disaster.

I had the pleasure of speaking with Senator Meyer at the press conference and he shared with me how the Town of Guilford has been pesticide free, and how other towns in Connecticut have followed suit. I intend to share that model with anyone who will listen and I am confident that our little State can continue to be one great big leader. Thanks for all you do! Please vote Yes on SB 443!

Respectfully submitted by,
Theresa Velenzas
Glastonbury CT
TVelenzas@sbcglobal.net