

**Testimony of Susan Zimmerman, Parent and Advocate
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Public Health Committee
February 28, 2014**

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

I am writing today in support of SB 126 An Act Concerning Children's Exposure to Chemicals. I urge the Public Health Committee to send this important legislation to the CT General Assembly for debate and eventual passage.

SB 126 is a commonsense measure to reduce the exposure of our young children to potentially toxic chemicals. Over the past 30 years, we have learned many of the chemicals in our consumer products are toxic. The unintended consequence of exposure to these toxic chemicals is a dramatic rise in learning and behavioral disorders including a ten-fold increase in autism spectrum disorder over the last 15 years and ADHD affecting over 2 million children in the U.S. Additionally there has been a rise in adult cancers – breast, testicular and prostate among them.

My own family is a demonstration of the link that scientists now believe exists. My daughter was born with autism spectrum disorder when the incidence was 1 in 10,000. Now my grandnephew and cousin's granddaughter have been diagnosed with ASD. These children are born into families with no previous family history of the disorder.

Further I am an eight-year breast cancer survivor and suffer from Sjögren's syndrome, an autoimmune disorder. Both are believed to have an environmental component and I now wonder if these diseases were triggered by my exposure to toxic chemicals during childhood.

Because of the experience in my own family, I urge you to pay attention to the growing consensus among the medical and scientific communities that protecting young children from toxic chemicals is an URGENT public health issue.

SB 126 is a simple step in the right direction to 1) require the DPH to identify chemicals of concern to children based on toxicity and exposure hazard and 2) make recommendations for action to the legislature every 2 years. Working with the Chemical Innovations Institute to find safer alternatives to chemicals identified as toxic also has the potential to advance green chemistry innovation in this state and could grow jobs.

As Mark Bittman said in today's New York Times "Protecting public health is a fundamental government responsibility." Please move forward with SB 126 to protect the young children in Connecticut from exposure to potentially toxic chemicals.