

Sen. Bartolomeo, Rep. Urban, and Members of the Children's Committee,

My name is Aymi Bennhoff. I am a Nurse Practitioner working in the School Based Health Center Program at Pawcatuck Middle School in Pawcatuck, CT.

I am writing in support of Bill 5653 AN ACT CONCERNING CHEMICALS OF HIGH CONCERN FOR CHILDREN..

In keeping with the precautionary principle, if a chemical has compelling evidence to suggest harm to a developing fetus or child, I agree that as consumers and parents we have the right to know about it so that we can choose which products to purchase and companies to support. I understand that some cost and effort may be involved in this process for manufacturers in particular; however I believe there is a greater long term cost in not addressing this issue- cancer is very expensive to treat (not to mention the emotional toll on patients and their families) and puts a great strain on our health care system, especially given the statistics put forth that 1 out of every 2-3 people will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime. In addition, if it is true that companies are not using toxic chemicals, after an initial investment in researching the source of their materials, they do not have much to worry about.

Lastly, it is difficult to assess absolutely how any particular chemical will affect any given individual. While in very small doses a chemical may be harmless and the body may be able to eliminate and detoxify it successfully, in larger amounts and in the presence of multiple toxins the toxicity of that product is increased significantly. Research that is considered "gold standard" strives to isolate one particular compound from another and does not look at the synergistic effect (for good or ill) of other environmental factors.

At school based health centers we attempt to assess the whole child and the complexity of risk factors that impact health. Having a list of hazardous chemicals available as a precautionary principle can help us as practitioners to advise parents on ways to minimize health risks for their children. Legislation such as this is a step in the right direction to provide protection for those who need it most- our children.

Sincerely,

Aymi Bennhoff

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