

Clean Water Action, Advocate, Coalition for a Safe and Healthy CT, 350CT

My name is Joyce Acebo-Raguskus and I thank you for this privilege to speak in support of HB 5653, An Act Concerning Chemicals Of High Concern To Children

Every day, we continue to expose our children to untested chemicals in food and consumer products because of a lack of federal regulations, ignorance, and irresponsibility. Our inability to revise The Safe Chemical Act (TSCA) and decision to practice the 'Precautionary Principal' has made our newborns and children human testing animals.

"Keep out of Children's Reach" is a misnomer. Do we even know what to keep out of their reach? This bill will help us discern which chemicals are potentially HARMFUL TO OUR HEALTH and the health of our children. A Health Committee review is an important step toward prevention.

Each day that we sit and deliberate, we potentially expose prenatal, newborns and children's growing minds and bodies to harmful chemicals that too often lead to the rise of children's cancer, neurological and endocrine disorders, and more. California just last week passed a law that requires furniture labels to say whether or not toxic flame retardants were added to upholstery materials, as reported in the Chicago Tribune on January 23, 2015. The importance of being informed about these potential health hazards cannot be overstated. The nation's largest furniture company, Ashley, claimed it did not know how harmful such chemicals were and is now committed to manufacturing without these chemical toxins, which by the way, are found to serve no protective purpose.

Such toxic chemicals would have been on our list of high concern. Further research shows that small amounts of exposure in young children are profoundly harmful. For decades, perhaps unknowingly, we have placed a heavy burden on our most vulnerable.

House Bill 5653 helps 'alert' parents and other consumers about what chemicals may be of high concern to their loved ones. I reach out to you today to urge you to pass this bill to help us stop this epidemic of chemical poisoning to young lives and our future generations.

Parents have the right to know what to 'keep out of reach with their children' including a list of chemicals of high concern that may have serious health consequences. Connecticut was the first state in our nation to ban BPA and to pass the "right to know" bill on GMOs.

Let not another winter session turn cold on our children and expectant mothers. There are already well over 200 toxic chemicals, including pesticides and PCBs, found in umbilical cords.

We are delivering toxic babies into this world often without our knowledge. In the third trimester, brain development happens very fast and in a certain order at a certain time.

"Neurons are being born and migrating to where they are supposed to end up in the brain, differentiating into different types of cells, establishing connections with other neurons," says David Bellinger, an expert in children's health at Harvard. I also cite "Little Things Matter," which exposes big threats to children's brains, and the cumulative effects of continuous toxic cocktails in children's development and I.Q. from the Ottawa Canada Environmental Health Conference.

I ask. "Is there anyone here who would deny that the unborn are at war with these chemical invaders?" The industry that for decades has flooded the consumer market with known toxins supports this invasion. We need to overhaul the regulatory process worldwide in order to protect children's brains. We must start state by state, right here in these rooms! The fragile developing brain, the body's most uniquely vulnerable organ, is in our hands, your hands, and in the hands of everyone in this room...ally or not.

I do not believe that any of us wants to continue this cascade of contamination. Let us join together and be on the side of prevention for the unborn, not the side of 'passive destruction,' contributing to rising illness in our children. **PARENTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO KNOW A LIST OF CHEMICALS OF CONCERN** and to avoid exposure to toxic chemicals, such as pesticides on school grounds, which trail into homes for long periods of time.

Vulnerability to chemicals occurs early in utero, during infancy, and in early childhood. I quote from our dear friend and colleague Dr. Philip Landrigan, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine and his colleague Philippe Grandjean, Harvard School of Public Health.

"The number of chemicals known to be toxic to children's developing brains has **DOUBLED OVER THE LAST SEVEN YEARS!** Biomonitoring studies demonstrate toxic chemicals in umbilical cords. Children will struggle from birth and are, at risk of becoming the first generation in a century to live shorter, less healthy lives than their parents. Science is showing strong correlations between exposures to synthetic chemicals in the environment and increasing rates of such chronic diseases in children as asthma, autism, type 2 diabetes, ADHA, leukemia, and brain cancer."

Do we want to continue flooding the umbilical cord with lead, methyl mercury, arsenic, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), toluene, and more? I don't think so. My goodness, what living cell has a chance for a healthy life?

In closing, I would ask you to support HB 5635 and to thank you for your continued diligence and compassion for the welfare of the children of CT.

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