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Honorable Members of the Committee On Children,

Re: Bill HB 5653 An Act Concerning Chemicals of High Concern to Children

Dear Honorable Members Of The Committee On Children

I support HB 5653 as a first step in protecting the children of Connecticut from exposure to chemicals that cause harm. While we all try to keep our children safe they are being involuntarily exposed to toxic chemical that cause harm every day. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of toxins – children and toxic chemicals don't mix.

There is mounting evidence showing the rise in cancer, leukemia, lymphoma, asthma, birth defects and many other conditions. Surely this is a public health crisis, but we in the health care field also see the less public tragedy, as we witness the suffering that illness and disease can cause for families and especially for their ill children.

There are two provisions which I do think need some further consideration by the Committee:

1. Once you have identified chemicals of potential harm there can not be a delay in acting to ban them in Connecticut and protecting our children. Waiting to report every two years is too late. I believe that the precautionary principle must be used. When a chemical is identified as having the potential to cause harm to human health or to the environment that measures should be taken to prevent harm – even if a cause and effect relationship is not fully established.

2. If the Department of Public Health is committed to do this work without additional resources, then the Committee will hopefully make sure that the Department has the resources, in all aspects, to do this work adequately! Surely they would want to consult with others who have dedicated their careers to toxic chemical trespass such as Dr. Landrigan of Mt. Sinai in NY and John Wargo at Yale.

One must ask what kind of society we live in if money for corporations that manufacture toxic chemicals is valued over the health of our children. Don't we have a moral obligation to our children and future generations to make sure we did all we could to ensure a toxic free legacy.

Thank you for the very, very important work that you are undertaking for all of us,

Roberta Silbert, MPH