



State of Connecticut
Latino and Puerto Rican
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Testimony in Support of House Bill 5653

Orlando J. Rodriguez

Associate Legislative Analyst, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

Committee on Children, February 5th, 2015

Senator Bartolemeo, Representative Urban, and distinguished members of the Committee on Children; my name is Orlando Rodriguez and I am an Associate Legislative Analyst with the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission (LPRAC). With direction from its board, LPRAC supports **HB 5653 AN ACT CONCERNING CHEMICALS OF HIGH CONCERN FOR CHILDREN**.

We are deeply disturbed with findings from research reports showing consumer products for children that "... include carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, and developmental and reproductive toxicants."¹ Furthermore, there is growing consensus among the medical and scientific communities that exposure to these chemicals is linked to the rise in serious diseases including a 20 percent rise in childhood brain cancers and leukemia, learning and behavioral disorders, as well as adult cancers.²

Separate findings from Physicians for Social Responsibility report that stores in urban areas, including **Hartford**, are "... selling more lead-laden toys and jewelry containing cadmium, a known carcinogen that causes kidney and immune system damage, than stores in more affluent communities."³ In Connecticut in 2012, **4.1 percent** of Hispanic children (under age 6) had a high level of lead in their blood, compared to **2.6 percent** among non-Hispanics.⁴

It is not surprising then that Hartford and other urban areas of the state have a higher incidence of children (under age 6) with a high level of lead in their blood.⁵ Together, the five towns with the largest Hispanic populations in Connecticut (Bridgeport, Hartford, Waterbury, New Haven, and Stamford) account for 49 percent of children newly identified with a high level of lead in their blood.⁶

LPRAC strongly recommends support for this legislation, which will result in tangible improvements in the health of Latino children in Connecticut.

¹ Washington Toxics Coalition, [What's On Your List: Toxic Chemicals In Your Shopping Cart](#)

² Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, [Chemicals and Our Health: Why Recent Science is a Call to Action](#)

³ Physicians for Social Responsibility, [Toxic Chemicals and Environmental Justice](#)

⁴ CT Department of Public Health Annual Disease Surveillance Report on Childhood Lead Poisoning based on 2012 data, figure 13

⁵ CT Department of Public Health Annual Disease Surveillance Report on Childhood Lead Poisoning based on 2012 data, table 3

⁶ ACS 2013 1-yr table B010011