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Testimony of Christopher Hudgins
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Good morning Chairman Bartolomeo, Chairwoman Urban and members of the Committee. My name is Chris Hudgins and I serve as the Vice President of Government Relations and Policy for the International Sleep Products Association (ISPA). For 100 years, ISPA has represented the interests of mattress manufacturers and suppliers of components and services to the industry. Today, we represent nearly 700 companies including members in East Windsor and Hartford. We appreciate the opportunity to share our views today on House Bill 6806 (HB 6806).

The mattress industry takes seriously the safety of our products. That's why we supported a new federal mattress flammability safety standard that took effect in 2007. The standard, codified at 16 CFR Part 1633, is an open-flame test meant to simulate a candle or other open flame coming in contact with a mattress. This standard is in addition to a cigarette initiation test, codified at 16 CFR Part 1632, that has been in effect since the 1970s. Taken together, these standards have already saved countless lives.

Every mattress, including crib mattresses, sold in the U.S. must meet both the 1632 and 1633 standards, which are enforced by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). To meet these standards, manufacturers use a variety of fiber materials to form a fire resistant fabric barrier that encloses the foam and other cushioning materials inside a mattress. This barrier is intended to prevent or slow the propagation of a bed fire by either blocking heat or oxygen from reaching and igniting the interior of the mattress. Both of these standards were based on scientific research and testing conducted by the federal government and the mattress industry to make sure that they promoted fire safety and that the resulting products were safe for consumers. In developing the 1633 standard, the CPSC studied the different fire barrier materials and concluded they were safe for consumers, mattress manufacturing employees and the environment.

We are concerned that HB 6806 would prohibit mattress manufacturers from using certain materials necessary to meet these federally-mandated flammability standards, which would put our members in direct violation of federal law. As a result, mattresses manufacturers could no longer manufacture or sell those products in Connecticut.

Given these reasons, we must oppose HB 6806.