

Testimony of Theresa Velenzas Before the Connecticut  
General Assembly of Public Health Committee  
March 2<sup>nd</sup> 2015

Good Morning Chairs, co-Vice Chairs, Ranking Members and Honorable Members of the Children's Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony supporting HB 6897 and Act Concerning the Application of Pesticides at Parks, Playgrounds, Athletic Fields and Municipal Greens.

As a mother of two young children ages 4 & 7 trying to be careful about exposure to toxins has become an increasing challenge. More and more I feel as though there is a danger lurking behind every corner. When I take my children to the park and they want to roll down the hill, sit on the grass or run barefoot, I cannot allow them to because I have no idea if and when a pesticide has been applied. Often times, I am faced with the response "But Mom! Look! The other kids are doing it!", and I cringe. How do you explain chemical trespass to children of this age? It's hard to explain that someone would spray a poison knowing that children might roll in it and get sick - way into the future - but that the adult spraying it doesn't MEAN to hurt anyone, or doesn't THINK what they are doing might hurt someone. It's hard to explain such a thing is "allowed". In fact, it's hard for me to comprehend.

I remember a time when I didn't have to worry about walking barefoot or playing in the grass with my dog at a park. If my children want to just run on the grass in town, I have no idea if it is saturated with pesticides and so to be safe, I redirect them.

The world we live in has become unnecessarily laden with toxic chemicals that put our youngest at risk. We need to reverse this trend and start reclaiming the right to live in a toxic free world. Our children deserve this.

As many experts will testify before you, there is a sharp rise in childhood and adult cancers, behavioral disorders, and respiratory illness and these exposures to toxins are beginning very early as umbilical cord analyses show. I am here today to support advocacy efforts to remove pesticides from public areas where children spend a lot of time. HB 6897 does just that.

I'd like to thank you for your time and work on this and let you know I sincerely hope we can have these new measures passed.

Respectfully,

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