

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
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Testimony by Susan S. Williams, MD, Associate Medical Examiner,
In Support of
Bill SB258: An Act Concerning Infant Safe Sleep

Committee on Public Health
February 19, 2015
Submitted by Susan S. Williams, M.D.
Associate Medical Examiner

**Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Distinguished Members of the
Committee on Public Health:**

I am **Susan S. Williams, MD, Associate Medical Examiner** at the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner here in Connecticut and **I support Bill SB258.**

In my career I have performed autopsies on over 100 infants, the majority of them associated with unsafe sleep conditions. These include **sleeping with adults**, other children, and or animals on a bed, sofa, or recliner. In these situations the infant can be **rolled on**, become **wedged** between the mattress and wall, or have a soft mattress and pillows or fluffy comforter and **blankets covering their nose and mouth, obstructing their breathing.**

Infants can also be unsafe in their cribs or Pack'n Plays when they are sleeping on a soft or ill-fitting mattress, or have soft bedding, pillows, and or stuffed animals. **These soft materials cover their faces and their breathing is again obstructed.**

Autopsies on children are, for me, the most difficult part of my job. To see a young life ended so quickly, particularly when something is easily prevented as unsafe sleep conditions is a contributing factor, seems so unfair to me. The families of these infants struggle to come to terms with their loss.

Any legislation which will **educate the public about this real risk of death to their baby** I give full support to. **People need to understand that, yes, it could happen to them.** It could happen the very first time they sleep with their baby or lay him/her face down on a fluffy pillow, or, even if they do everything the same, for some unknown reason, it could happen the 100th time. **No family is immune to this potential tragedy.**

For the reasons above, **I support Bill SB258.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan S. Williams, MD". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Susan S. Williams, MD
Associate Medical Examiner,
Connecticut Office of the Chief Medical
Examiner
February 19, 2015