



**State of Connecticut**  
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**Testimony in Support of House Bills [5461](#) and [6741](#)**

Orlando J. Rodriguez

Associate Legislative Analyst, Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission

Committee on Children, February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Hartford, CT

Senator Bartolemeo, Representative Urban, Senator Martin, Representative Kokoruda, 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). LPRAC supports HB-5461 and HB-6741.

It is imperative to reduce the incidence of diabetes among Hispanic children, which have the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest rate of obesity among racial/ethnic groups (grades 9-12) and will account for 25 percent of children in Connecticut by 2020.<sup>1</sup> There is an added economic cost associated with obesity, as a child with type II diabetes will incur nearly \$9,150 annually in additional healthcare costs.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, 70 percent of overweight adolescents will become overweight adults.<sup>3</sup> In Connecticut in 2003, diabetes cost **\$1.7 billion** in direct and indirect costs.<sup>4</sup>

We are also deeply disturbed by research showing consumer products for children that "... include carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, and developmental and reproductive toxicants."<sup>5</sup> Separately, 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."<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup>

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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> [Epidemiology of Childhood Obesity](#) by Sally S. Wong

<sup>2</sup> [Impact Of Childhood Obesity On Employers](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Epidemiology of Childhood Obesity](#) by Sally S. Wong

<sup>4</sup> [The Connecticut Diabetes Prevention and Control Plan 2007-2012](#)

<sup>5</sup> Washington Toxics Coalition, [What's On Your List: Toxic Chemicals In Your Shopping Cart](#)

<sup>6</sup> Physicians for Social Responsibility, [Toxic Chemicals and Environmental Justice](#)

<sup>7</sup> CT Department of Public Health Annual Disease Surveillance Report on Childhood Lead Poisoning *based on 2012 data*, figure 13

<sup>8</sup> CT Department of Public Health Annual Disease Surveillance Report on Childhood Lead Poisoning *based on 2012 data*, table 3

<sup>9</sup> ACS 2013 1-yr table B01001