

# Yale SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

*Department of Pediatrics*

Section of Pediatric  
Emergency Medicine

100 York Street, Suite 1F  
New Haven CT 06511

T 203 737-7433 *administrative office*  
203 688-3333 *department*

F 203 737-7447

[www.yalepediatrics.org](http://www.yalepediatrics.org)

**Testimony by Kirsten Bechtel MD In Support of  
Proposed Bill No. 258, An Act Concerning Infant Safe Sleep Practices**

Public Health Committee

February 20, 2015

Submitted by Kirsten Bechtel MD

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and distinguished Committee Members:

I am a pediatrician who works in the Emergency Department of Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital, an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Yale University School of Medicine and am Co-Chairperson of the Child Fatality Review Panel in Connecticut.

I support Proposed Bill No. 258, which would "*require hospitals to provide informational materials regarding recommended safe sleep practices for infants, including American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations concerning safe sleep practices, to parents after the birth of a child at the hospital.*"

For the past 13 years, I have served on the Child Fatality Review Panel, which reviews the unexpected deaths of children and adolescents in Connecticut to determine public health policy or public safety measures to address preventable deaths. Over this time period, similar to what has been seen nationally, we have observed that the majority of infants who die while sleeping do so in unsafe sleep environments, such as sharing beds with adults and siblings, or in cribs that are cluttered with toys and bedding causing them to be entrapped. In Connecticut the ME's office does not categorize these deaths as SIDS anymore, as that diagnosis is reserved for when an infant dies sleeping supine in an uncluttered crib, a circumstance that we have rarely observed over the past 10 years.

**Therefore, the importance of new parents hearing consistent information about a safe sleep environment (sleeping in a crib or bassinet, in the supine position and proximate to the parents) cannot be overstated. This information should be consistently delivered and reinforced to parents by health care providers, starting at the time of newborn hospital discharge and throughout the first year of life during routine health maintenance visits.**

For the reasons above, I support Proposed Bill No. 258.

Respectfully submitted,



Kirsten Bechtel, MD

Associate Professor of Pediatric Emergency Medicine  
Yale University School of Medicine