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Testimony for Public Hearing
Committee on Children
March 3, 2016

H.B. 5299: AAC TOXIC FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS AND UPHOLSTERED RESIDENTIAL FURNITURE.

Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban and distinguished committee members, I want to thank you for this opportunity to present testimony in strong support HB 5299. **AAC TOXIC FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS AND UPHOLSTERED RESIDENTIAL FURNITURE**

I am Hacah Boros, Environmental Coordinator for the Connecticut Nurses Association, a founding member of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut. We urge your strong support of HB 5299. **AAC TOXIC FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS AND UPHOLSTERED RESIDENTIAL FURNITURE**

In the 1970's flame-retardants were found to be carcinogenic and highly absorptive so they were voluntarily removed from children's clothing at that time. Since then these chemicals have found their way back into our children's products although the toxicity and danger to the health of children has remained the same. Flame retardant exposure is now linked

with cancers and immune suppression, neurological impairments such as learning disorders, lower IQ and hyperactivity, hormone disruption (lowering thyroid and other hormone levels), and reduced fertility and birth defects. It is ingested mostly through the dust in our homes.

Americans have some of the highest blood levels of flame-retardants in the world. Studies have shown that toddlers are the most vulnerable with blood levels 3-4 times what their mothers accumulate. Flame-retardants, once in your body can take months and even years to process out; and they are accumulative in your body. The CDC has several reports on flame-retardants in Americans. Also the EPA has expressed their concern with the toxicity of this group of chemicals. Many scientists, health care professionals, fire fighters and concerned citizens are increasingly alarmed at the research results.

Some products found to have flame-retardants include nursing pillows, infant changing pads and even car seats. The chemicals are placed in the foam of these products but do not bind to the foam. The flame-retardants off-gas and fall as dust to the ground exposing everyone in the home. Babies and toddlers spend their time lying on these products, crawling on the floor in the dust particles, and putting everything in their mouth. They are more affected because they breathe and ingest these particles in greater amounts than an adult.

I am a nurse and mother of two small children (3 and 6). I believe that every parent and consumer has the right to know what is in the products they purchase. It should not be up to the consumer to have to research the health safety of these products. It is unacceptable to continue to sell and produce products for children that contain flame-retardants, as they are known carcinogen, especially since there are affordable, safer alternatives. It is substantiated by the presence of these toxic carcinogens offers no real fire safety benefit. Instead, they delay the foam underneath the fabric from igniting for about 3 seconds. Meanwhile, the fabric has gone up in flames and the chemicals from the foam are actually more toxic than smoke—making it a real health hazard to firefighters as well. Fire injury and death are generally caused by smoke inhalation, not by actual burns. Therefore, there really is no reason to have these toxic chemicals in the products that children will lay on, sit in and play on for hours and hours each day.

I hope that Connecticut will continue to champion legislation to protect the children and firefighters of Connecticut. Connecticut residents need your help to make our homes safer and healthier places to live in.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue and your commitment to the health of Connecticut residents. I urge your strong support of **HB 5299. AAC TOXIC FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS AND UPHOLSTERED RESIDENTIAL FURNITURE**

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Connecticut Nurses Association

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Resources:

- Alliance for Toxic-Free Fire Safety: <http://toxicfreefiresafety.org/index.php>
- Breast Cancer Fund: <http://www.preventionstartshere.org/exposed-chemical-exposures-among-firefighters-topic-of-new-study/>
- CDC: http://www.cdc.gov/biomonitoring/PBDEs_FactSheet.html, and <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tf.asp?id=900&tid=183>
- Chicago Tribune, *Playing with Fire*: <http://media.apps.chicagotribune.com/flames/index.html>
- Environment and Human Health: <http://www.ehhi.org/flame/> and http://www.ehhi.org/reports/flame/EHHI_FlameRetardants_1113.pdf
- EPA: <http://www.epa.gov/oppt/existingchemicals/pubs/actionplans/pbde.html>
- Green Science Policy Institute: <http://greensciencepolicy.org>