

Legislative Testimony
Public Health Committee
Raised Bill No. 5350: An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health's
Recommendation on Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply
Wednesday, February 24, 2016
Laurence K. Levy DMD

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and Members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Dr. Laurence Levy and I am a General Dentist practicing in Middletown, CT. I also serve on the Board of Governors for the Connecticut State Dental Association. I am writing this testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 5350, An Act Concerning the Department of Public Health's Recommendation on Fluoridation of the Public Water Supply.

Connecticut has added fluoride to the public water supply for public water systems serving 20,000 people to a concentration of .8-1.2 milligrams per liter of water since the mid to late 1960's. For almost the last 50 years this has been a safe and effective way to prevent tooth decay in children and adults in addition to regular brushing, flossing and good dietary habits.

More than 70 years of research has shown that maintaining optimum levels of fluoride in community water is safe and effective in preventing tooth decay by at least 25% in both children and adults. Simply by drinking water, Americans can benefit from fluorides cavity protection whether they are at home, work or school. The CDC named community water fluoridation one of the 10 great public health achievements of the 20th century. In April 2015, the U.S. Public Health Service changed the recommended fluoride levels in drinking water to 0.7 milligrams of fluoride per liter of water. This bill would get Connecticut in compliance with the new recommendations.

Seventy years of research on the safety of fluoride has also been demonstrated. A number of these questions are based on myths and misconceptions advanced by a small faction opposed to water fluoridation. In 2011 the Calgary city council voted 10-3 to remove fluoride from the city's drinking water. Opponents questioned the safety of fluoride in drinking water and suggested it should be up to individuals to decide whether to expose themselves to the additive. Now that is almost five years later, the University of Calgary just completed a study on the effects of that decision. The study compared the children of Calgary with the children of Edmonton. Edmonton still fluoridated the public water system. The lead investigator, Dr. Lindsay McLaren of the University's School of Medicine found an increase of tooth decay in the children of Calgary without the addition of fluoride in the public water supply. For her research, McLaren compared the oral health of 5,000 grade 2 kids in Calgary and Edmonton during two timeframes – before fluoride was removed in 2004/05 and after in 2013/14. Her team chose seven and eight year olds because they have a mix of both baby and adult teeth. McLaren and Patterson relied on data from a scale that measures decaying, extractions and fillings in teeth. In 2004/05, second graders in

Calgary had 2.6 tooth surfaces with issues but by 2013/14, they had about 6.4 teeth with decaying surfaces. That's an increase of 3.8. In Edmonton, where fluoride stayed in the water, tooth decay climbed from 4.5 surfaces to 6.6 – a difference of 2.1. The duo says this disparity is a “statistically significant difference”. Calgary children have more than twice as many cavities as their counterparts in Edmonton, where fluoridation continues.

Please do not let this happen to the citizens of Connecticut.

Thank You

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