

**Connecticut Public Health Committee**  
**Statement of Paul Harrington, Tommy's Tanning**  
**SB 219 – Opposition Testimony**  
**March 5, 2018**

Thank you, Honorable Chairs and members of the committee. My name is Paul Harrington. I represent Tommy's Tanning – a Connecticut business with 14 locations in the state. I am proud to teach sunburn prevention to people of all ages in our communities.

Tommy's Tanning and the American Suntanning Association worked with legislators in Connecticut in 2013 to proactively champion and enact the current law in this state: Requiring parental consent signed in a salon for minors aged 17 to use UV tanning equipment in the salon. We require that consent to be signed in person by a parent – that's the industry standard whether or not the state has a law – and minors under age 17 are not allowed to use UV tanning equipment in our stores.

This law is effective for two main reasons:

- First, it respects the right of parents to decide how to address this issue as a family. UV exposure is NOT an industrial chemical – it is something humans need. My business is dedicated to helping those who want sunlight in their lives to learn how to prevent sunburn.
- Second, it recognizes that 17-year-old teenagers can drive. What well-meaning proponents of this bill may not realize is this: 41 percent of all sunbed usage today occurs in NON-SALON sunbeds in homes, apartment complexes, gyms and other places where the sunbed does NOT have a professional operator to properly set the exposure time.

In other words, passage of this bill would simply drive those who want to use sunbeds into those non-salon units that won't be covered by ANY law, where no professional operator sets the exposure time like my staff does. So there is no doubt passage of this bill would INCREASE sunburn – not decrease it.

That's what happened in New Jersey. A 2016 Rutgers University study showed that prohibiting UV tanning in salons for teens under 17 did NOT reduce sunbed usage in that state – it just sent those 17 year olds to non-salon sunbeds.

Joe Levy from the American Suntanning Association is here to talk about the science. But please keep this in mind: The risks the proponents of this bill say come from "sunbeds" are NOT from studies that isolate professional tanning salons, but rather come from studies where many of those surveyed used non-attended HOME tanning units – which are not controlled by a professional operator and are therefore likely to lead to sunburns.

Please keep in mind that the scientific community today has both proponents of regular non-burning UV exposure and opponents – and that’s why the decision about sunbed usage in a family should be left up to the PARENTS.

This issue is more complex than proponents of this bill have made it. *Outdoor* sunlight is a level one carcinogen. But no one would say we shouldn’t get SUNLIGHT, right? Please keep in mind that the category “Level One Carcinogen” also includes bacon, birth control pills, and even red wine. Of all the things the government puts in this list, there is only one that humans need: UV exposure. And thanks to indoor lifestyles, we get less regular sunlight today than at any point in history.

There are plenty in the scientific community who think that the service we provide at a professional sunbed salon is helpful when we do our jobs correctly. And there are many who know that a base tan from a salon – in combination with sunscreen usage outside – works better for many people to prevent sunburn outdoors than sunscreen usage alone.

In conclusion, we are here to be part of the solution and to discuss this issue constructively and intelligently. The science clearly supports balance. And I have respect for those who are here today in support of this bill. No one is saying those groups can’t continue to promote their views.

But viewed in totality, the science supports balance and the parent’s right to be involved in this decision. And that’s why parental consent should continue to be the standard in salons for 17-year-old clients, and we will support any constructive measure to bolster that standard.

So let’s work TOGETHER to send a balanced message to this state and your constituents that sun care is serious business WITHOUT over-reaching.

I’m happy to talk about how professional salons – and my salons in this state – are part of the solution moving forward in fighting sunburn and overexposure. I’m happy to take your questions.