Testimony in support of HB 6515
An Act Concerning Toxic Chemical Flame Retardants in Children's Products and Residential Upholstered Furniture

Dear Senator Abrams, Representative Steinberg, Ranking Member Somers, Ranking Member Petit and Honorable members of the Public Health Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 6516, An Act Concerning Toxic Chemical Flame Retardants in Children's Products and Residential Upholstered Furniture.

Flame retardants have been shown to be both ineffective at retarding flames and highly toxic. The chemicals used are highly persistent and bioaccumulative. They off gas and are commonly found in indoor air and dust. Exposure to these chemicals has been shown to be harmful to human health.

Young children who walk and play close to the floor are most at risk of being exposed to these chemicals. They have been shown to have blood levels of these chemicals as much as three times higher than adults. These chemicals have been linked to lower IQs in children, developmental delay, and hyperactivity. They have also been linked to childhood cancers which have increased by more than 20% since 1975. The rise of childhood cancers is thought to be linked to increased environmental exposure to chemicals.

Firefighters are also at a higher risk of being exposed to smoke from toxic flame-retardants and other chemicals. Firefighters have been shown to have increased incidents of several types of cancers.

As an occupational therapist who has worked with people across the lifespan I have seen first hand the devastation these types of illnesses have on families.

Since there is no fire-safety benefit in the use of these chemicals it is time to take action to restrict these chemicals as they have been shown to harm human health.

I urge you to support HB 6516.

Sincerely,
Janet Bellamy, MEd., OTR/L
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