Testimony of Representative John Hampton in support of
Proposed H.B. No. 6516 AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS AND UPHOLSTERED RESIDENTIAL FURNITURE.

PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2019
LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
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Chairwoman Abrams, Chairman Steinberg, Vice Chair Lesser, Vice Chair Young, Ranking Member Somers, Ranking Member Petit and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, for the record my name is John Hampton, State Representative for the 16th District and I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 6516.

For all of these reasons below I believe it is extremely important that we no longer allow toxic flame retardants in infant and children's products. I strongly believe that the negative potential health consequences far outweigh any added safety benefits of having these products contain flame retardants – with the exception of high risks situations - which is why the bill has an exemption for children's car seats.

- Children have 4-5 times the level of exposures to flame-retardants as adults due to their small body size.

- The flame retardant known as "Tris," was used in children's pajamas in the 1970s until it was declared a carcinogen and was banned from children's pajamas in 1977. However "tris," is now widely used in other baby products. According to a 2011 study looking at the presence of various flame retardants in baby products, "Tris" was the most common flame retardant added to infant products other than Pajamas.

- Flame-retardants cross the placenta and therefore get into the cord blood of fetuses. The ensuing baby gets another dose of flame-retardants through the mother's milk. And then the infant gets exposed again because most infant products, such as their mattresses, changing tables, nursing pillows, baby carriers, and car seats all contain toxic flame retardants.

- The flame retardant story is one of substituting one harmful flame retardant for another - and then that one ends up equally harmful. This continues because flame retardants are poorly tested, if tested at all, before they enter the market place. Some flame-retardants are neuro-toxic, some are carcinogenic, some some are hormone disrupters and some affect the thyroid gland.

- Penta BDE was widely used in the 1980's, substituting and earlier one that was found harmful - then it was phased out in 2005 because it too was found harmful to health. It was found to be bioaccumulative, affect the thyroid gland, the immune system and had the ability to be a neurotoxin. Now FireMaster 550 has replaced it. NIH has found Firemaster 550 to be an endocrine disrupter. It has not been tested for its ability to cause cancer, affect reproduction or neurological development.

- Products that contain flame-retardants are not labeled - therefore consumers have no way to protect themselves or their children from flame-retardant exposures. Thank for this opportunity to provide testimony.