



**Connecticut  
Public Health  
Association**

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**CONNECTICUT PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION**  
Testimony in support of  
**HB 6526 - AN ACT CONCERNING TOXICS DISCLOSURE AND  
INNOVATION FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN**

**CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE**  
**MARCH 5, 2013**

The Connecticut Public Health Association strongly supports **House Bill 6526: AN ACT CONCERNING TOXICS DISCLOSURE AND INNOVATION FOR HEALTHY CHILDREN**. The legislation as it currently reads would authorize the Department of Public Health to identify and prioritize chemicals of high concern to children and establishes a disclosure process for manufacturers of children's products to follow if their products contain one of these priority chemicals.

When the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976 (TSCA) was created to allow the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to monitor and regulate chemical substances, over 60,000 chemicals were grandfathered in without requiring the producers of these chemicals to demonstrate their safety [1]. Over 20,000 new chemicals have been introduced since 1976 and despite EPA's power to regulate toxic substances under TSCA, testing has only been requested on approximately 200 chemicals [2,3]. Out of such a small portion of the chemicals reviewed, only five types of chemicals have been either banned or limited in use [2].

Chemical manufacturers maintain that chemical ingredients are proprietary information and therefore confidential, hindering the ability of the EPA and other researchers to assess their safety [3]. Furthermore, in 1989 the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans overturned an EPA ban of asbestos, a known carcinogen. The result: the EPA was left with limited ability to enforce bans of toxic chemicals, many of which, including asbestos, remain in widespread use in consumer products [4].

As the number of chemicals used in the United States has increased, so have the incidence rates for different types of cancers (brain, breast, lung, bladder, liver, prostate, kidney, and esophageal) as well as leukemias, lymphomas and skin melanomas [5]. The incidence rates of environmentally related childhood illnesses, such as asthma and childhood cancers, have also been steadily rising over the past 25 to 30 years [6]. While the TSCA has failed to adequately test and regulate potentially harmful chemicals, another agency, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), has identified over 400 chemicals as "known, probable or possible" carcinogens [3]. The President's Cancer Panel, in their 2008-2009 Annual Report, stated they were troubled to find that cancers due to environmental factors, including chemicals, have been severely underestimated [3].

Newer studies have identified certain chemicals as “obesogens.” These chemicals change a person’s metabolism, causing weight gain, adding to the burden of the current obesity epidemic. Children are frequently exposed to many of these chemicals, including industrial chemicals such as Bisphenol A (BPA), phthalates, Polychlorinated Biphenyl Ethers (PCBs), various pesticides, lead, and many more [7,8].

In a 2002 study, the Mount Sinai School of Medicine estimated the impact of environmental pollutants have on children’s disease prevalence along with their associated healthcare costs. They calculated that the environmentally attributable portion of four common childhood illnesses – lead poisoning, asthma, cancer, and neurobehavioral disorders, are costing the United States approximately \$54.9 billion dollars annually [9]. In other words, unregulated chemicals are very costly to our health and our economy.

There is a growing nationwide movement to reform U.S. chemical policy. In the past few years several attempts to pass national reform efforts have failed; the Safe Chemicals Act of 2010 and the Toxic Chemicals Safety Act of 2010 both failed to become law, as did the Safe Chemicals Act of 2011 [10, 11]. Even the Inspector General of the EPA considers the country’s chemical policy to be inadequate in ensuring the safety of chemicals in the United States [12].

Due to the lack of movement on the federal level, California, Maine, Minnesota and Washington have passed comprehensive chemical reform laws in the past few years to address the gaps in American chemical policy [13]. In 2008, Maine became the first state to pass a comprehensive chemical reform bill, the *Act to Protect Children’s Health and the Environment from Toxic Chemicals in Toys and Children’s Products*. This model law required the Maine Department of Environmental Protection along with other state agencies to review and prioritize “chemicals of concern,” and required manufacturers to reveal chemicals used in consumer products. Maine has subsequently identified a list of 49 “chemicals of high concern,” to be considered priorities for regulation (<http://www.maine.gov/dep/safechem/highconcern/index.html>).

CPHA supports the reduction and eventual elimination of toxic chemicals in consumer products in order to improve the health of Connecticut citizens, particularly children. Rather than examining one chemical each year, adopting an ongoing list of chemicals of high concern would more effectively address the harms these chemicals pose to children’s health and development. HB 6526 does this in a responsible and thoughtful manner. Connecticut has been a leader in eliminating harmful chemicals such as BPA, lead and cadmium for consumer and children’s products, and has the chance to be a leader in chemical policy reform by enacting HB 6526. We respectfully urge your support of this bill.

## References:

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