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Lawmakers and Advocates Urge Ban of Toxic Chemical Flame Retardants From Products That Expose Children

Studies Show These Chemicals Don't Provide Fire Safety Benefit and are Highly Toxic

Hartford, CT – Lawmakers and advocates gathered today to urge passage of a ban on toxic chlorinated tris flame retardants from children's products. Citing research that shows these chemicals do not provide any fire safety benefit, lawmakers pointed out that flame retardants, like chlorinated tris, are highly toxic, linked to cancer, impaired brain development, disruption of hormones and have no place in children's products. Certain fibers and barriers are non-toxic alternatives to these chemicals.

“American babies are born with the highest recorded levels of flame retardants in the world. There is overwhelming evidence that flame retardants are harmful to children so why do we continue to allow toxic flame retardants in children's products? We banned children's pajamas containing Tris nearly 40 years ago because of adverse health effects and yet still allow it in crib mattresses, toys, and changing tables. We cannot in good conscience allow children to sleep every night in a bed containing chemicals known to be dangerous,” said **Co-Chair of the Children's Committee State Representative Diana Urban (D- Stonington, North Stonington)**.

“Chlorinated Tris flame retardants are found in so many products and children are uniquely vulnerable. As a physician, I am deeply concerned that children have very high levels of these chemicals in their bodies during periods in which their organs systems, including brain development, are undergoing rapid growth. There is no benefit to having these chemicals in products that children lay on and play on” stated **Mark Mitchell, MD, MPH, Senior Policy Advisor, National Medical Association**

“As a former volunteer firefighter, nurse and parent of two young children, I strongly support this bill” stated **Jose Perez, RN, BSN and member of the Coalition**. “Research shows that these when products that contain these chemicals are on fire, they produce smoke that is highly toxic. High cancer rates in firefighters are linked to exposure to these chemicals. More lives are saved by having smoke alarms and fire-safe cigarettes than these toxic chemicals that don't work” added Perez.

“The bill to ban flame retardants and the Chemicals of High Concern to Children are critical bills to protect children’s health. The Chemicals of Concern to Children Act will identify chemicals that threaten our children’s health, like flame retardants, providing a basis and an incentive for industry to replace them with safe, non-toxic alternatives. This children’s health protection is urgently needed and long overdue,” said **Louis Burch, Program Director for Citizens Campaign for the Environment.**

“Further, parents have a right to know what is in the products they purchase for their children, and government has the responsibility to ensure that those products do not make our children sick. As part of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy CT, we urge lawmakers to pass the ban on flame retardants and the Chemicals of High Concern to Children bill. Flame retardants are just one example of chemicals of concern. Just as we expect to know exactly what ingredients are in the food we buy for our families, parents deserve to know what kinds of harmful chemicals are contained in the foams and plastics that our children use on a daily basis. This is a simple, effective step that Connecticut can take to protect the health of our children. **AND IT’S FREE,” added Burch.**

“We applaud the Children’s Committee members and all the legislators here today that are putting children’s health first. Chemical flame retardants sound like a good thing but in fact, they are not. They don’t work and are highly toxic and persistent chemicals. Major retailers like Ashley Furniture and Ethan Allen are no longer using them in products for these very reasons. Further, the Chemicals of High Concern to Children bill to set up an on-going framework to identify other chemicals of concern is the right thing to do for Connecticut’s children. It is time we put CT’s children’s health above the rhetoric of the chemical industry” stated **Anne Hulick, RN, MS, JD, Coordinator for the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut.**

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