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Dear Editor,

There is currently a bill before the Legislature that has received little to no media attention but, if passed, would have a significant impact on the health and well-being of Connecticut's residents.

Senate Bill 274 was introduced to protect people, specifically children, from exposure to toxic chemicals – the very chemicals that have been found in scientific studies to be associated with cancer, infertility, leukemia and diabetes to name a few. This bill requires the Department of Public Health, in partnership with a three other state agencies, study programs from other states that address the issue of toxic chemical exposure and suggest ways that Connecticut can reduce exposure to chemicals that are dangerous to health.

A cancer diagnosis is tragic and frightening – but just as tragic is the reality that cancer is no longer that rare disease that your cousin's best friend's neighbor was diagnosed with. Sadly, cancer seems to have become more and more common. Why? In my lifetime, I've lost a cousin, two grandparents, at least two schoolmates and a number of family friends to cancer. Both of my parents are cancer survivors and at this moment I have a dear friend battling for his life.

When I learn that science has found a correlation between the increased use of chemicals in consumer products in the United States and the increased incidence rates of many types of cancers – the light bulb goes on – and I wonder how in the world these statistics can be ignored? Please don't get me wrong - I'm so very grateful that scientists are working diligently to "find a cure," but I believe we should be working just as hard to prevent the dreaded cancer diagnosis and also the many serious illnesses mentioned above. When you consider that chemical exposure has also been linked to increased rates of obesity, autism, and other developmental disorders, passing Senate Bill 274 becomes even more urgent.

This legislation is an important first step toward keeping Connecticut citizens – particularly children – healthy. With more than 80,000 chemicals (most of which haven't yet been tested for toxicity to humans) being used to make products we use everyday – I welcome the recommendations that Senate Bill 274 will require and I urge lawmakers to support the measure. Please do the same.

Sincerely,

Noele Kidney  
2 Meagan Circle  
Ellington, CT 06029

Noele Kidney is the Project Coordinator for the CT Public Health Association

