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CT CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE RAISES BILL TO PROTECT KIDS FROM TOXIC CHEMICALS IN CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Points to Washington State report that sheds light on the many dangerous chemicals being used in children's products

HARTFORD –Yesterday, during its first meeting of the Legislative Session, **the General Assembly's Children's Committee** raised legislation "An Act Concerning Children's Products and Chemicals of High Concern" that would authorize the state's Department of Public Health to study chemicals of high concern to children and report back to the Legislature every 2 years with recommendations to protect children from toxic chemical exposure. DPH has indicated that this legislation would have no additional fiscal impact on their budget.

The Committee's House Chair and bill champion, **State Representative Diana Urban (D-Stonington)**, said that this legislation is needed when our state's youngest citizens are being exposed to dangerous chemicals associated with serious illness everyday. She pointed to a report released yesterday by Washington Toxics (made possible by Washington State's 2008 Children's Safe Products Act), where it was found that companies manufacturing children's products disclosed using hazardous chemicals that are hormone disruptors, linked with cancer and associated with many reproductive and developmental problem in their children's products.
http://watoxics.org/publications/whatsonyourlist_report_final.pdf

"It is imperative that we protect our children from exposure to toxic chemicals," Representative Urban said. "It is a fact that they are contained in many children's products and there is no way for parents to obtain information on the negative effects of these chemicals. This legislation will start the process of creating a framework to evaluate them and inform parents and the public."

Anne Hulick, RN, MSN, JD, Coordinator for the CT Campaign for Toxic-Free Kids, applauded the efforts of the Children's Committee to protect children from toxic chemical exposure. "I am thankful to the Children's Committee and for Rep. Urban's leadership on this issue. They recognize that toxic chemical exposure is a serious public health issue and that young children are the most vulnerable, and more importantly susceptible, to the harmful effects of the thousands of chemicals being used in commerce today," said Hulick. "Cancer is now the 2nd leading cause of death in people under the age of 20 – reducing children's exposure to known dangerous chemicals just might change that."

Washington's law is the first of its kind in the United States and has been lauded for shedding light on the use of harmful chemicals in children's products. For the first time under the 2008 law, medium-sized manufacturers with gross sales of \$100 million or more were required to disclose whether they were using any of the 66 "Chemical of High Concern to Children" in children's products.

The chemicals being reported are linked to cancer, hormone disruption and atypical reproductive development, like early puberty. Among the chemicals reported are: formaldehyde, bisphenol A (BPA), parabens, phthalates, heavy metals, flame-retardants and industrial solvents.

Hulick pointed out that among the Washington State's total 4,605 reports of toxic chemicals in children's products are reports of cancer-causing formaldehyde in children's tableware and harmful flame-retardants in car seats and toys. "Chemicals of High Concern to Children" used in children's toys, clothing, safety products and bedding were reported by manufacturers between March and September 2013.

"Thanks to the Washington report, we now know unequivocally that toxic chemicals are used in the manufacturing of products consumers are buying for their children," said **Hulick**. "These are children's products that are sold in many major national retailers. Sadly, parents would have a difficult time avoiding exposing their children to toxic chemicals simply by adjusting their shopping lists."

Researchers at WTC were particularly surprised by new reports of manufacturers adding toxic flame retardants to baby car seats, booster seats, plastic jewelry and toys, even as health experts warn against serious health problems. Perhaps most egregious was a report by Harmony Juvenile Products, who reported using a chemical known as decabromodiphenyl ether (BDE-209 or deca), banned from furniture under a 2007 law in Washington state, in baby car and booster seats.

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