

Written Testimony of Zena Richter of Darien, CT,  
Before the Connecticut General Assembly Select Committee on Children,  
February 28, 2013

Testimony in Support of:  
**HB6332, AN ACT CONCERNING TOXIC FIRE RETARDANTS IN CHILDREN'S  
PRODUCTS**

Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and honorable members of the Committee on Children,

My name is Zena Richter. I am a resident of Darien, CT. I write in strong support of HB 6332 An Act Concerning Toxic Fire Retardants in Children's Products.

I am the mother of three children and the aunt of 11 nieces and nephews. I have always been an advocate for children – a vulnerable group without a voice in government. Adults must educate themselves and be aware of the health concerns we are exposed to daily, where we have little or no control in consumer spending to make a difference. The choices we make today for ourselves and our children directly impact our health, the health of our growing children, and future offspring.

Multiple animal and human studies suggest that many flame retardant chemicals used to treat furniture are either toxic or have not yet been proven safe for long-term use. Chlorinated Tris flame retardants, including TDCPP, TCEP and TCPP, are highly toxic chemicals added to the polyurethane foam of many products. An immeasurable amount of these toxic fireproofing chemicals are added to pillows, couch cushions, vehicle seats, fabrics, and some electronics, including computers. Flame retardants will be part of the ecosystem for decades.

The use of flame retardants in many children's products have long been known to be carcinogenic and mutagenic. The chemicals in these retardants have off-gassing, get into the air and dust in our homes, and are ingested and absorbed. "[C]hildren are not little adults and they are exposed to greater amounts of environmental toxins than adults. Beginning as fetuses, children are much more vulnerable to toxic chemical exposures. Their nervous, respiratory, reproductive and immune systems are just beginning to develop. They are in a dynamic state of growth, with cells multiplying and organ systems developing at a rapid rate. Young children breathe more rapidly, inhale more air, eat more food and drink more liquids in proportion to their body weight. Their metabolic rates are higher. Their system for excreting toxins is less efficient. They may retain more toxins per exposure than adults because their bodies mistakenly "think" that it is useful, e.g. lead. Children remain more vulnerable to some toxic exposures through young adulthood."<sup>1</sup>

1. "Environmental Health Issues Facing Young Children in San Francisco." *Healthy Children Organizing Project*. HCOP, n.d. Web. 26 Feb. 2013.  
<[http://www.healthychildrensf.org/index.php/hcop/articles/environmental\\_health\\_issues\\_facing\\_young\\_children\\_in\\_san\\_francisco](http://www.healthychildrensf.org/index.php/hcop/articles/environmental_health_issues_facing_young_children_in_san_francisco)>.

The chemical “[i]ndustry's lobbying against common-sense health protections is especially disturbing given [Center for Environmental Health’s] recent discovery of the cancer-causing and hormone-altering flame-retardant chemical chlorinated Tris in foam diaper-changing pads, foam nap mats, and other baby and children's foam products sold at Walmart, Target and other national retailers. What's especially outrageous is that Tris was banned from children's pajamas more than 30 years ago -- yet our testing shows that it is still widely used in many other products for infants and children.”<sup>2</sup>

Doesn't it make sense to require chemical companies to demonstrate safety before products end up on the shelves and in our homes, schools, and workplace? It is evident that the rising number of childhood diseases is due to the continual bombardment of chemicals children and pregnant women are exposed to. It's wrong to use our children as guinea pigs and take a “wait and see” approach. We must take every step possible to reduce exposure to toxic carcinogens in our most vulnerable and most precious of humans, our children!

I applaud the members of the Committee on Children for raising this important issue and urge you to support the passage of HB6332 this session.

Sincerely,

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2. Green, Michael. "For Some Chemicals, Less Is More." *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 23 Jan. 2013. Web. 26 Feb. 2013.  
<[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michaelgreen/toxic-chemicals\\_b\\_2498459.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michaelgreen/toxic-chemicals_b_2498459.html)>.