



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF **HB 6516**  
AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF FLAME RETARDANT CHEMICALS IN CHILDREN'S  
PRODUCTS AND UPHOLSTERED RESIDENTIAL FURNITURE

February 22, 2019

**To:** Honored Chairs Sen. Abrams and Rep. Steinberg and Distinguished Members of the Public Health Committee

**From:** Lori Brown, Connecticut League of Conservation Voters

Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in SUPPORT of HB 6516**, An Act Concerning the Use of Flame Retardant Chemicals in Children's Products and Upholstered Residential Furniture.

**Toxic flame retardant chemicals represent a significant risk to public health and have proven ineffective at improving fire safety.** These chemicals have been linked to neurological impairments, endocrine disruption, interference with thyroid hormone action, immune disorders, and even cancer. Studies have also found that they pose a disproportionate risk to the development of fetuses, infants, and young children. Because of the increased threat these toxic flame retardants pose to children, they should not have any place in products aimed at youths.

These toxic chemicals are also widespread, migrating out of household consumer products and into the home environment. Toxic flame retardants can migrate out of furniture and bond with household dust, leading to significant risk of exposure. A 2004 study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated that **97% of people living in the United States have measurable quantities of chemical flame retardants in their blood.**

Flame retardants are also highly persistent in the environment. They collect in the fatty tissue of humans, fish, and wildlife, and are considered to be one of the most common contaminants in our streams and rivers by the United States Geological Survey (USGS). **Toxic flame retardants have been found in virtually every treated wastewater discharge in the nation.**

A growing body of research also calls into question the efficacy of these flame retardants. Household fires have become more toxic as more flame retardants are used in home furnishings. When these chemicals burn, they produce large quantities of smoke, soot, and chlorine gas. **These chemicals put firefighters and first responders at greater risk of certain cancers because of their exposure to these toxic fumes.**

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found higher rates of several types of cancer—including mesothelioma, esophageal cancer, and cancers of the mouth, kidneys, breasts, intestines, stomach, and lungs—in a study of 30,000 career firefighters. Our first responders put their lives on the line, and we owe it to them to protect their health and safety as best we can.

The smoke and soot generated by these toxic chemicals can also make it harder for firefighters to locate victims in household fires. While flame retardants may have been created with fire safety in mind, it is clear they actually increase the risk of serious harm. Furthermore, there is no data to suggest that flame retardants actually prevent fire-related deaths. **States that do not require furniture to be treated with flame retardants do not have a statistically higher incidence of fire deaths than the State of California**, which imposed flammability standards in 1975 leading to the use of chemical flame retardants in nearly all household furniture. In 2013, because of health concerns and lack of evidence about improved safety, California actually repealed its flammability standards.

**Overwhelming evidence suggest flame retardants pose significant threat to our public health while offering no tangible benefit.** To protect the health of our children and first responders, CTLCV urges you to **VOTE YES on HB 6516.**

Thank you for your consideration as you deliberate on HB 6516.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Brown".

Lori Brown  
Executive Director  
CTLCV

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