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**TESTIMONY RE: RAISED BILL 527 AN ACT PROHIBITING CERTAIN  
HARMFUL CHEMICALS IN CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS AND BANNING THE  
SALE OF RECALLED PRODUCTS.**

General Law Committee Hearing  
March 4; 2008

Good afternoon Senator Colapietro, Representative Stone and members of the General Law Committee.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Nurses' Association (CNA), the professional organization for registered nurses in Connecticut, and a founding partner of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut. I am Dr. Mary Jane Williams, past-president of the Connecticut Nurses' Association current chairperson of its Government Relations Committee and chair of nursing at the University of Hartford. I have practiced nursing for over 40 years and have been educating nurses in Connecticut for 35 years. I am providing testimony in support of Raised Bill. No. An Act Prohibiting Certain Harmful Chemicals in Children's Products and Banning the Sale of Recalled Products.

No one knows what the triggers are to the incidence of disease onset. As nurses we must therefore apply the Precautionary Principle defined as "When an activity raises threats of harm to human health or the environment, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of the activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of the proof. The process of applying the precautionary principle must be open, informed and democratic and must include potentially affected parties. It must involve an examination of a full range of alternatives, including no action."(Wingspread Statement on the Precautionary Principle, Jan. 1998).

Therefore we must ask the ultimate questions: What do we do with the knowledge we have related to the environment? How do we apply the Precautionary Principle? We are asking you to apply this Principle and ban common hazardous chemicals such as lead, Phthalates and Bisphenol A which are included in this bill. These hazardous chemicals are found in an array of children's products including toys, baby bottles, lunch boxes and metal jewelry. All three of these chemicals can all harm child development. Manufacturers of all three should be required to use safer alternatives.

Phasing out of many chemicals of concern *is* possible because safer alternatives exist and others are being developed. Connecticut's companies need to transition to these alternatives in order to be viable in the global market. The European Union is phasing out 1,400 of the most toxic chemicals; Connecticut will need to use these alternatives in order to sell in this market. Our legislature can help with this transition by taking the foundational steps to establish an Innovation Institute, participate in a multi-state chemicals clearing house on safer alternative and create a list of hazardous substances.

It is our responsibility to educate the public to make safe choices for themselves and their families and to advocate for good health. In order to advocate for good health we must eliminate exposure to chemicals and their by-products. Nurses are the largest group of health care providers nationally. Nursing practice focuses on prevention and wellness. Nursing has a socio-political responsibility to create social action that promotes the creation of a healthy environment. It is about protecting our children, the next generation and the public. "It is about the health of the public".

Thank you for your time and the leadership of the Attorney General and the members of this committee on this critical children's issue. We urge the committee to vote favorably to support this bill.

*The Connecticut Nurses' Association is a member of the Coalition for a Safe and Healthy Connecticut and Health Care Without Harm*