



CHANGE IS POSSIBLE. CHANGE IS HAPPENING.

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**Testimony before the Oregon House Health Care Committee in support of HB 4123  
Andrea Paluso, Family Forward Oregon and The Mother PAC  
February 8, 2012**

Co-Chair Greenlick, Co-Chair Thompson and members of the committee:

I am the Executive Director for Family Forward Oregon and The Mother PAC, affiliated organizations supporting policies that *work* for today's families. I am also a mother of two kids ages 4 and 6.

My children were almost certainly born with toxic chemicals already in their bodies. After all, a 2010 President's Cancer Panel report concluded that 300 chemical contaminants have regularly been found in the umbilical cord blood of newborn babies. The study warns that: "to a disturbing extent, babies are born 'pre-polluted.'" In addition, our children face additional exposure in their daily lives through the products we buy to feed, care for and entertain them. These are unnecessary exposures that could be minimized or eliminated with the right regulatory framework.

For our children's sake, and for the good of Oregon, we want our communities to be protected from preventable health problems, particularly those that affect children and fetuses, whom are more vulnerable to toxic exposures in every way. Unfortunately, Oregon's chemical regulation system has left Oregon's families and children unnecessarily exposed to too many of these chemicals.

I talk to parents nearly every day who struggle to gather and decipher information about the products they buy –for use by their children – and the potential impact of the chemicals in those products. As consumers, we are laboring in opaque systems designed to make it difficult for us to access the information we need to make healthy choices on our children's behalf. We have too little access to information about chemicals of concern, and even less information about which chemicals are actually used to make the products we buy.

Parents *should* be able to walk into any store in Oregon to purchase products for our children and know that they do not contain any chemicals that could harm their child. Barring that, we have the right to know which chemicals to stay away from and what chemicals the products we buy contain. In other words, we deserve the right to information that helps them to make healthy, informed decisions.

We simply have to do a better job of determining which products are safe and where we can eliminate exposures to protect our kids' health. HB 4123 can put us on a path to feeling secure that the products we buy to feed, care for and entertain our children are not harming their health.