



Testimony in Support of HB 3162

May 13, 2013

Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
Sheri Malstrom, RN

Co-Chairs Bates, Nathanson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 3162.

My name is Sheri Malstrom. I have been a public health nurse specializing in child and maternal health for the past 28 years.

I'm here today to testify on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of phasing out the use of high priority chemicals in children's products.

The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to represent over 13,000 Oregon Nurses. Oregon Nurses make up the largest segment of Oregon's health care work force, and work in nearly every health care setting imaginable, from large hospitals to small local clinics, from corrections to school-based health centers, and community-based public health.

The nurses that I work with in Multnomah County provide care to some of our most vulnerable residents. We help take care of pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children. Frequently, the people we care for have nowhere else to turn. They are struggling to make ends meet, and to get by in this difficult economy. They are likely to be in poor health, more likely to have children at risk for poor developmental outcomes, and less likely to know about the warnings around hazardous chemicals in children's products and toys. They don't have the time to track down the latest data on product safety.

Many chemicals in children's products and toys can lead to serious health effects such as: early puberty, heart disease, certain cancers, and reproductive disorders. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 133 million people in the U.S. —almost half of all Americans—are now living with chronic diseases and conditions, which account for 70 percent of deaths and 75 percent of U.S. health care costs. Reducing exposure to chemicals contributing to chronic diseases will benefit the health of the American public as well as the health care system.

As a matter of public health, the state should act to ensure that no Oregonian unknowingly purchases a product that contains hazardous chemicals for their child or family.

As a public health nurse and a member of ONA I support HB 3261. This is an important step toward reducing exposure to toxic chemicals and improving the health of all Oregonians. Long-term, this bill will help ensure parents have one less thing to worry about.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I appreciate your time and consideration. I urge you to support HB 3261.