



Testimony in Support of SB 1569

February 4, 2014

Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services
Sheri Malstrom, RN

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1569.

My name is Sheri Malstrom. I have been a public health nurse specializing in child and maternal health for nearly 30 years.

I'm here today to testify on behalf of the Oregon Nurses Association in support of disclosing and phasing out the use of high priority chemicals in certain children's products. As a nurse, I believe this is a common sense policy for Oregon's families and for the patients I work with.

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. Frequently they are using second hand items, requiring phase out of certain chemicals would eventually increase the safety of products passed down from family to family.

Many chemicals in children's products and toys can lead to serious health effects including 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. This legislation allows consumers to make informed choices about their purchases for their families.

As a public health nurse and a member of ONA I support SB 1569. 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 SB 1569.