



Testimony in Support of SB 478 A

June 9, 2015

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

Co-Chairs Bates and Nathanson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 478 A.

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

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

The Oregon Nurses Association is proud to represent more than 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 in 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. While limiting exposure to toxics is important for everyone, it's especially important for pregnant women, infants, and children.

Frequently, the people we care for at the county have nowhere else to turn. They are struggling to make ends meet and to get by in this difficult economy. They are more likely to be in poor health, and more likely to have children at risk for poor developmental outcomes.

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 United States—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, and to ensure that manufacturers are replacing these chemicals with safer alternatives.

As a public health nurse, as a parent, and as a member of ONA, I support SB 478 A. This bill is an important step towards 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 478 A.