



SB 426, Toxic Free Schools Act

Chair: Sen. Dembrow, Vice-Chair Sen. Weber, and members of the committee:

I am Andy Harris, a retired Portland physician and grandfather of seven school age grandchildren, ages 7-14. I am here to testify in support of SB 426 on behalf of Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices.

Reducing pesticide use makes good medical sense, cuts costs to school districts, and promotes human health. The Oregon schools integrated pest management plan currently is an unfunded mandate, and reporting has been irregular. SB 426 will help schools to transition off pesticides and to increase the accuracy and transparency of pesticide use.

Pesticides are toxic chemicals precisely because they are designed to kill living things. Many are toxic to the human brain and nervous systems. Studies in children have linked organophosphate exposure (eg Dursban and diazinon) to developmental delays, hyperactivity, behavioral disorders, lymphoma and leukemia. Additionally, pesticides have been shown to cause or exacerbate learning disorders, asthma, sterility, and Parkinson's Disease.

Let's not forget that our schools also employ many adults, some of whom have chemical sensitivities or are pregnant. Even small, single doses of organophosphates on a critical day of fetal development can decrease DNA synthesis in the developing brain, resulting in defective immune and endocrine systems.

Exposing children to the spraying of pesticides is both a medical and moral issue. Oregon Coalition of Christian Voices believes we have a particular responsibility to look after the weakest and most vulnerable members of society, especially our children. We should not needlessly expose them to toxic chemicals when other non-toxic alternatives exist.

Thank you for supporting SB 426.

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