

Testimony in Support of:

**S. 81, An Act Relating to Brominated Flame Retardants and Chlorinated Tris**

Testimony to Senate Health & Welfare Committee, February 26, 2013

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**Senator Ayer and distinguished members of the Senate Health & Welfare Committee, my name is Nick Carter and I'm here on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Northern New England, testifying in support of the S. 81, An Act relating to Brominated Flame Retardants and Chlorinated Tris.**

The mission of PPNNE is to: provide, promote, and protect access to reproductive health care and sexuality education so that all people can make voluntary choices about their reproductive and sexual health. PPNNE provides our patients with a full range of reproductive health services including cervical, breast and testicular cancer screenings, as well as follow-up services for people of all ages. We work to maintain Vermont's low teen pregnancy rate, prevent, detect and treat sexually transmitted diseases and provide access to primary and preventative health care services.

We are proud to have 11 health centers across the state and in 2011, our health center staff saw over 17,000 patients and had over 25,000 visits. As the largest reproductive health care provider in Vermont, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England is committed to educating ourselves and patients about the dangers and health risks from exposure to chemicals for women, men and their families.

As a trusted provider of health care to thousands of Vermonters every year, we've joined with other environmental and health advocates in calling for the complete phase out of Deca and Chlorinated Tris in favor of safer alternatives. A safe environment, free of harmful chemicals is critical to the health and welfare of all Vermonters. More and more data is showing us that chemical exposures that occur prior to conception and during pregnancy can have negative ramifications on adult health and S. 81 takes action in protecting Vermont's families.

Carcinogenic flame retardants have no place in home products. Chlorinated Tris flame retardants, including TDCPP, TCEP and TCPP, are highly toxic chemicals added to the polyurethane foam of many products. Their presence is particularly worrisome when found in children's products and furniture. Toxic chemical exposure during critical windows of fetal development and to young infants and children is of particular concern. TDCPP was banned from children's pajamas in the 1970s when it was found to be multigenic, meaning that it causes changes to DNA in certain cells that can lead to cancers of kidneys, liver and testicles. It is also a hormone disruptor and neurotoxin.

A recently published epidemiology study found that men living in homes with high amounts of TDCPP in household dust had reduced sperm counts and altered levels of hormones related to fertility and thyroid function. Chlorinated Tris is increasingly found in breast milk and the bodies of children and

**adults, causing families to have every reason to be concerned. Banning polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE's) from furniture & electronics in 2009 was the right thing to do and extending that ban is the next logical step.**

**From Newport to Brattleboro, Planned Parenthood of Northern New England is committed to promoting reproductive justice and we believe strongly in an individual's right to protect their reproductive health. If these chemicals, and others that have been shown to cause harm to women and families, are in the products that we use everyday we are running the risk of increased infertility and problematic pregnancies.**

**S. 81 is an important step in providing much needed information about what products these harmful chemicals are in so that men and women who are planning their families can ensure that the products they use on a daily basis do not hinder their ability to have a safe and healthy pregnancy and family.**

**There is no reason to delay action on this important issue. Planned Parenthood of Northern New England urges you to support S. 81 and send it on to the full Vermont legislature. All Vermonters should be guaranteed the right to adequate reproductive health care and I thank you for your time.**

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<sup>i</sup> REGULATORY POLICY LEADING TO HALOGENATED FLAME RETARDANTS IN FURNITURE AND BABY PRODUCTS: FIRE SAFETY AND HEALTH CONCERNS <http://greensciencepolicy.org/sites/default/files/4502.pdf>