

House Republican Press Release

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A VIEW FROM THE INSIDE
State Representative Ruth Fahrbach



General Assembly, Congress pass laws to ban harmful chemicals found in some plastic children's products

In response to a number of nationwide reports regarding tainted toys, the Connecticut legislature and Congress have recently passed legislation aimed at eliminating potentially hazardous chemicals from certain children's products.

During the regular 2008 legislative session, the Connecticut General Assembly passed H.B. 5650, which established limits on the amount of lead in children's products. The non-partisan Office of Legislative Research reports that, with certain exceptions, the bill makes children's products that fail to comply with these limits banned hazardous substances under the State Child Protection Act. It also prohibits the sale of toys or other articles marketed for children under age 16 that contain asbestos.

The act additionally requires retailers and other businesses selling a banned hazardous substance to complete a certificate that accounts for its disposal, and requires the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to post on its Web site a list of banned toys and other articles intended for use by children and compile a list of toxic substances that potentially should not exist in children's products and safer alternatives to them.

This law is effective October 1, 2008, except the provisions concerning the disposition certificate which was effective upon passage of the bill.

At the end of July, Congress took the initiative to ban outright three particular chemicals (or phthalates) from children's products. The phthalates DEHP, DBP and BBP were banned in products marketed to children younger than 12

In explaining why they voted to ban these substances from children's toys, some members of Congress indicated that some studies had linked the phthalates to a variety of long-term health issues.

According to news reports, studies have shown that toxins can be ingested when toys with phthalates are placed in the mouth, making them particularly dangerous in children's

toys. Serious long-term side-effects have been linked to these harmful chemicals in some studies, although the results of these studies are still a source of contention among some environmental researchers.

Ultimately, each individual parent is responsible for their child's safety. However, when compelling scientific evidence is present, it is sometimes appropriate for government to act in the interest of public safety.

State Rep. Ruth Fahrback represents the 61st District, including Suffield, and parts of Windsor and East Granby, in the General Assembly.