

Presbyterian Church (USA) Washington Office • Evangelical Lutheran Church in America • The
Union for Reform Judaism • National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd •
United Methodist Church-General Board of Church and Society • National Council of Churches •
Oblates of Mary Immaculate; Justice, Peace/Integrity of Creation Office •
Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) •
The United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries

June 24, 2008

Dear Chairman Dingell and Subcommittee Chairman Rush,

As various faith traditions, we are united across theological lines on the need to protect vulnerable populations. We are taught to care for our own bodies as holy temples; we are further called to care for children as they are sacred and most vulnerable to toxic chemicals. You have a pivotal opportunity to strengthen laws that will allow us to care for our nation's children. We urge you to enact the strongest and swiftest laws to protect them from lead and phthalates.

In our society we have seen the devastation caused to a child's future from lead poisoning—developmental delays, mental impairment, and chronic renal failure. The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that the safest level for lead exposure would be 40ppm. While we recognize that neither the Senate nor the House version of the Consumer Product Safety Commission Reform Act offer this level of protection, the 100ppm in the House bill is a marked improvement from the current federal standard of 600ppm.

We are also concerned about the presence of phthalates in children's products and the implications they have on the future reproductive health of baby boys and girls. Animal studies suggest the possibility of testicular cancer, damage to male reproductive organs, and early puberty in girls as a result of fetal or infant exposure to phthalates. While we can't know for certain what damage phthalates might have in our bodies, we are seeing a rise in early onset puberty in girls, cancer rates, and fertility challenges among families. Exposing children to suspected or known harmful chemicals such as phthalates and lead is no way for us to care for the future generation of leaders.

We applaud the overwhelming bipartisan effort to pass both HR 4040 and S 2663, the Consumer Product Safety Commission Reform Act. We now ask that the joint conference committee again act boldly to enact legislation to:

- Increase funding and authority for the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) to protect our nation from hazardous chemicals in consumer products
- Strengthen lead standards to ensure that toys are safe for America's children
- Create a database of unsafe or dangerous products to better inform consumers
- Ban six classes of phthalates in children's products
- Allow states to continue strengthening laws that protect children's health

These actions help pave the way towards broader, more comprehensive chemicals reform. We are already seeing prophetic actions by individual states to protect children from lead, phthalates, and other chemicals. We ask that you act now to ensure that our nation is safer for all of God's children.

Sincerely,

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