



Contact: Bill Kirk
Communications Director
Michigan LCV/LCVEF
616-459-6459 - w
616-437-3674 - c
bill@michiganlcv.org
40 Monroe Center Suite 200
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

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Gigantic Rubber Ducky Visits Bronson Park To Support Passage of the Children's Safe Products Act

Bills to provide parents with a right to know if their children are being unnecessarily exposed to toxic chemicals awaits action in the Michigan Senate in Senator Tom George's Health Policy Committee

Kalamazoo, MI- Kalamazoo area lawmaker Representative Robert Jones (D-Kalamazoo) was joined by health professionals, parents, toy store owners, and environmental advocates today at Bronson Park to raise awareness about toxic chemicals in children's products. The group of advocates, known as the [Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health](#), is celebrating the passage of the Children's Safe Products Act (HB4763-4769) in the Michigan House of Representatives, and seeking support for the passage of the package of bills in the Michigan Senate. The legislation is currently awaiting a hearing and a vote in the Senate Health Policy Committee, which is chaired by Senator Tom George (R-Kalamazoo), a second term Senator and candidate for Governor in 2010.

"Toxic chemicals simply do not belong in toys, nor in our children," said Ken Fletcher, Director of Government Affairs for the Michigan Nurses Association, a member organization in the Michigan Network for Children's Environmental Health. "Exposure to toxic chemicals from children's products is unnecessary and preventable."

The Children's Safe Products Act (HB 4763-69) requires manufacturers and importers who use the small subset of chemicals known to be highly hazardous and present in children ("chemicals of highest concern") to publicly disclose (in 2012) which of these chemicals they use in children's products sold in Michigan. Parents and other consumers would have easy access to this information from the Michigan Department of Community Health.

"We're hopeful that Senator George will choose the empowerment of parents and well-being of Michigan's children over partisan politics and special interests by swiftly moving these bills," said Sarah Mullkoff, with Clean Water Action - Michigan. "The children, parents, and environment of Michigan need Senator George to stand up for the public interest in face of opposition from toy importers and their special interest allies."

"We need to help all of our children grow up in a safe and healthy environment," said Sarah Barba, teacher and mother of 2 turned safe toys activist once she found out she was exposing children to a piece of toxic plastic corn. "These bills would help

protect children from the threat of toxic toys by giving parents the information we need to make responsible choices.”

[The Ecology Center](#) in Ann Arbor has been hosting town hall meetings across the State over the last two years about toxic toys. At these meetings, “toy testing” has been available to the public with an XRF analyzer, which is basically an x-ray gun that can test products for toxic chemicals. Unfortunately, many of the products tested have registered hazardous levels of toxic chemicals. A list of toys tested and the results can be found at www.Healthytoys.org. “Learning and developmental disabilities have risen dramatically the last few decades – at tremendous cost to the state and our children’s quality of life,” said Dr. Bill Weill, MD, Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics & Human Development at Michigan State University. “We must protect vulnerable children from these unnecessary exposures to known toxic chemicals.”

The Children’s Safe Products Act does not ban, restrict, phase-out, label or otherwise regulate any particular chemicals. The legislation also does not directly impact Michigan’s businesses since retailers and industrial users are exempt, as are small toy manufacturers.

“This legislation will help responsible toy businesses in Michigan,” said Bill Kirk of the Michigan League of Conservation Voters. “Since Michigan’s toy manufacturers are almost exclusively small, the main impact on Michigan businesses would be to have access to more information from toy importers. This legislation should help encourage Michigan-manufactured products, which tend to have fewer chemicals of highest concern compared to imports.”

“Thank you to the Kalamazoo lawmakers – Representatives Jones and DeShazor – who are standing up for Michigan’s children,” concluded Mike Shriberg, Ph.D., Policy Director for the Ecology Center and Michigan Network for Children’s Environmental Health. “We now need Senator George’s help to protect Michigan’s children and empower Michigan parents now.”

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