



A VOICE FOR CHOICE  
ADVOCACY

## LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR AB2998 (Bloom)

Juvenile products: flame retardant materials

March 26, 2018

Dear Assembly Member Quirk and members of the Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee,

A Voice for Choice Advocacy asks for your **AYE VOTE on AB2998**, which prohibits the sale of juvenile products, mattresses, and upholstered or reupholstered furniture in California that contain toxic flame retardant chemicals.

Since the implementation of fire safety standards in the 1970s an increasing number of products have been doused in toxic flame-retardant chemicals (polybrominated diphenyl ethers, or PBDEs) to meet these stringent regulations. But since these toxins are not chemically bound to the plastics, foam, fabrics and other materials to which they're added, they easily leach and expose people, including children, at a much higher level, to these toxic chemicals, with serious health consequences as a result.

These chemicals are now omnipresent in American households and have steadily built up in the environment and in human bodies. Children are exposed to juvenile products that contain these toxic chemicals multiple times a day. A 2011 study (<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/pdf/10.1021/es2007462>) shows that up to 80 percent of children's products, including 60 percent of car seats (not included currently in this bill), contain PBDEs and other flame retardant chemicals. Mattresses and couches are also key contributors to increased exposure to highly toxic flame-retardant chemicals. On average Californians spend 6-9 hours each day on mattresses with their face in close proximity to the mattress, breathing in these chemicals. Research published in 2012 Environmental Science & Technology (<https://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/es303471d>) revealed that 85 percent of couch foam samples tested contained chemical flame retardants.

In utero and childhood exposures to flame-retardant chemicals have been shown to be associated with neurodevelopmental delays, including poorer attention, fine motor coordination, and cognition, in school-age children (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23154064>). Flame retardant chemicals have also been linked to decreased fertility, endocrine disruption, thyroid problems, cancer and liver toxicity. In recent years, research has revealed that these toxic chemicals are associated with a range of serious health effects in firefighters including cancer, heart disease, and lung disease.

In addition to being toxic, flame retardants are also ineffective and unnecessary. According to California's Bureau of Electronic and Appliance Repair, Home Furnishings and Thermal Insulation (BEARHFTI), flame retardant chemicals in furniture do not provide a meaningful fire safety benefit. A restriction on the sale of products containing chemical flame retardants is the only way to ensure every Californian has access to products that don't present a dire health risk to their families just by their mere presence in a home.

AB2998 will do exactly that. For this reason, we ask that you support AB2998.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina Hildebrand

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Giving issues a voice, A Voice for Choice Advocacy advocates for people's rights to be fully informed about the composition, quality, and short- and long-term health effects of all products that go into people's bodies, such as food, water, air, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.