



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jose M. Serrano

Serrano, Kavanagh: Keep Carcinogens Out Of Children's Products

JOSÉ M. SERRANO December 23, 2013

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New Bill Introduced Eliminating Sale of Children's Products with Formaldehyde in NYS

NEW YORK - State Senator José M. Serrano and Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh announced the introduction of a new bill banning the sale of children's products containing the carcinogen formaldehyde by manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers in New York State.

Formaldehyde has been classified as a human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research and the National Toxicology Program, an interagency program of the Department of Health and Human Services. Despite this proven health threat, it continues to be used in many household products, including those intended to be used by children such as toys and linens. After pressure from environmental and public health advocates, Johnson & Johnson recognized the health risks associated with this chemical and agreed in 2012 to remove formaldehyde from their products, many of which are applied directly to the skin of infants and children.

Children are more susceptible to the dangers of formaldehyde which can cause serious nervous system damage and asthma. A 2011 report by Washington Toxics Coalition and Safer States showcased how frequently formaldehyde was found in children's blankets, clothing, and toys despite being classified in the worst category for carcinogenicity and as a severe

developmental toxin.

"As the parent of two small children, I'm keenly aware of and deeply concerned about the many environmental hazards our children face everyday," said Senator Serrano. "Despite its linkage to cancer and serious damage to the nervous system, formaldehyde is found in items geared toward children, such as toys and personal care products. The 29th Senate District is home to the nation's highest asthma rates, and formaldehyde had been proven to exacerbate this troubling respiratory disease. I'm honored to work with Assemblymember Kavanagh, who is a proven fighter for issues of environmental justice, and I look forward to swift passage of this critical legislation," concluded Serrano.

Assemblymember Kavanagh said, "When parents bathe and care for their children, they should be able to trust that the products they buy are safe to use, and certainly free of highly toxic substances that are known to cause cancer. It shouldn't take a law to get makers of these products to follow that principle, but unfortunately, it's all too common for big businesses to put profit before human health. Banning formaldehyde from children's products is an important step in the ongoing battle to keep unsuspecting consumers safe from toxins added to everyday items. As long as chemical industry lobbyists and their allies in Congress continue to prevent effective federal regulation, states like New York need to act."

Kathy Curtis, Executive Director of the statewide environmental health group Clean and Healthy New York, said, "Only 83 substances are deemed known human carcinogens by the National Toxicology Program. Formaldehyde is one of them, making it one of the most dangerous substances known to man. Like radiation and arsenic, other known carcinogens, it is a substance you'd never knowingly use on your baby. But you don't see formaldehyde on the label, so parents are shopping blind. That's why New York needs this law, and we applaud Assemblyman Kavanagh and Senator Serrano for introducing it."

Assemblymember Kavanagh represents the 74th Assembly District on the East Side of Manhattan and is a member of the Assembly Committee on Environmental Conservation and the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators. Senator Serrano represents the 29th Senate District in Northern Manhattan and the Bronx and is a member of the Senate Committee on Environmental Conservation. As Executive Director of Clean and Healthy New York, Kathy Curtis works to advance broad policy and market changes to promote safer chemicals, a sustainable economy, and a healthier world.

The full bill is available online [here](#).