

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Upon Introduction of the
Kid Safe Chemicals Act of 2005
November 10, 2005**

Today, I am pleased to introduce the “Child, Worker and Consumer-Safe Chemicals Act of 2005,” also known as the “Kid Safe Chemicals Act.” I am particularly pleased that Representatives Solis, Slaughter, and Pallone are joining me in this effort to create a non-toxic environment to protect the health of children, workers and others.

The legislation we introduce today is companion legislation to an important bill that was introduced in the U.S. Senate earlier this year. Senators Lautenberg and Jeffords introduced S.1391 with Senators Boxer, Clinton, Corzine, Kennedy and Kerry to address the major problem of inadequate chemical regulation in this country.

The United States’ current regulatory approach to chemicals is in dire need of being modernized. As Congress begins to take up this issue, the European Union is starting to resolve a multi-year process to achieve the same goal and is developing what may become the state-of-the-art approach to chemicals regulation. While this issue is proceeding overseas, we cannot sit upon our hands here in the United States. It’s clear that our system must be modernized, and I have no doubt that it will be modernized. Our goal is that Congress begin this process sooner rather than later.

The Kid Safe Chemicals Act responds to the growing body of scientific literature which identifies chemical exposures as a factor in the rise of disorders and diseases such as birth defects, asthma, neurological and developmental disorders, infertility and certain types of cancer.

Study after study reveals alarming evidence of our exposure to industrial chemicals and pollutants. Bio-monitoring studies report the presence of hundreds of synthetic chemicals in our bodies – even in the bodies of infants and fetuses. These chemicals are not household names: bisphenol A, brominated flame retardants, phthalates, and perfluoro compounds. Yet we are exposed every day – on the job, through our food and water, and in our homes. Computers, cosmetics, even children’s toys can contribute to our collective “body burden” of chemical contamination.

Tens of thousands of chemicals have never been properly assessed for their potential health and environmental risks. The problem can be traced to the 1976 federal law that was meant to empower the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to take action on such threats. The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) has been in place for 29 years, but has failed to protect Americans from dangerous chemicals.

A July 2005 report by the Government Accountability Office documented the abysmal results of this federal policy. Of the 62,000 chemicals on the market when the law took effect, the EPA has used its authority under the Toxic Substances Control Act to evaluate less than two hundred, and invoked its power to regulate just five groups of chemicals.

This system is badly broken.

The Kid Safe Chemicals Act will reform our failed approach to chemical regulation and put us on track to reassert U.S. leadership. This legislation will protect kids by recognizing their special vulnerabilities and requiring manufacturers to provide health and safety information prior to distributing a chemical in consumer products. This will end the false presumption that we have relied upon for too long – that a substance is safe until proven dangerous.

This legislation is endorsed by the American Public Health Association, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and over a dozen pediatricians, other physicians and researchers from the National Centers for Children’s Environmental Health. This legislation is a strong starting point in a debate our country needs to have. I am proud to introduce Senator Lautenberg’s legislation in the House and look forward to working with colleagues in both chambers to act upon it as soon as possible.