

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING

Chemical Exposure, Children's Health and Disability

"Childhood disabilities from chemical exposure during development are often not treatable and therefore must be prevented."

Institute of Neurotoxicology and Neurological Disorders (Dec. 2004)

May 5, 2005

Dear Colleague:

We invite you to attend a briefing on May 10, 2005, on the latest scientific understanding of the relationship between chemical exposures and learning and other developmental disabilities. The briefing will underscore the need for fully funding the National Children's Study and the need for chemical regulation policies that better protect children, the most vulnerable among us. Presentations will be given by:

American Association on Mental Retardation

Learning Disabilities Association of America's Healthy Children Project

Collaborative on Health and the Environment's Learning and Developmental Disabilities Initiative

When: May 10, 2005: 10:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.

Where: 406 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Learning and other developmental disabilities are estimated to affect one in six children in the U.S. under the age of 18, and scientists report that rate is increasing. The National Academies of Science (NAS) estimates that 25 percent of developmental and neurological deficits in children are due to the interplay between environmental and genetic factors, and research indicates that the developing fetus and children are particularly vulnerable to chemical exposures. Of the more than 80,000 chemicals currently registered in the marketplace, only 12 neurotoxicants have been thoroughly studied. Exposure to these chemicals in the womb can damage the fragile developing brain and contribute to learning and developmental disabilities.

The United States is spending \$77 billion per year just for special education services to students with disabilities. A recent National Institutes of Health study estimates that for mercury exposure alone, the cost to society is about \$8.7 billion annually. The total economic costs to society are undoubtedly much higher. The significant toll of chemical exposures during pregnancy and early childhood threatens not only our children but also the economic health and security of the United States. While learning and development are influenced by genetic makeup, 50 to 75 percent of the etiology for mild mental retardation is unknown.

Other Sponsors of this Briefing:

Easter Seals

United Cerebral Palsy,

Developmental Disabilities Research Centers Associations

National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities

United Cerebral Research & Educational Foundation

National Association of Private Special Education Centers

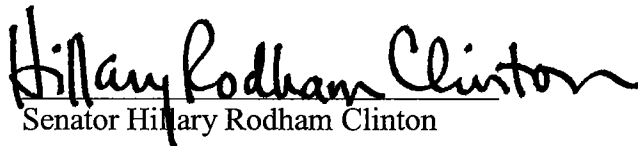
The Arc of the United States

Association of University Centers on Disability

Sincerely,



Senator Frank R. Lautenberg



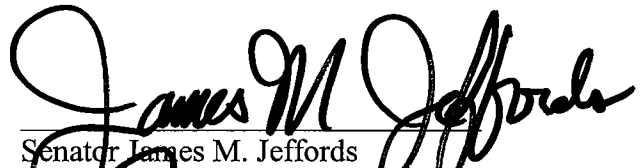
Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton



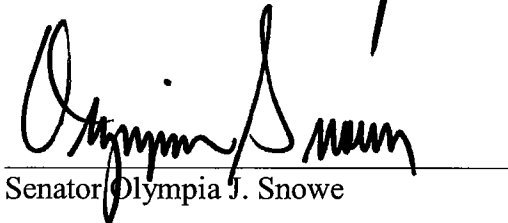
Senator Mike DeWine



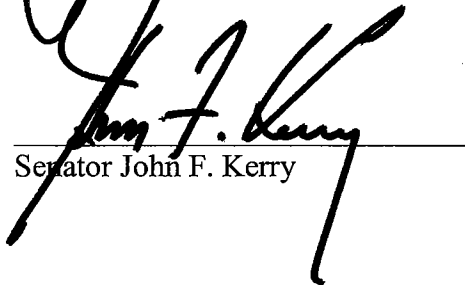
Senator Edward M. Kennedy



Senator James M. Jeffords



Senator Olympia J. Snowe



Senator John F. Kerry

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“Chemical Exposure, Children’s Health and Disability”

Congressional Briefing

Tuesday, May 10th

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Dirksen Building - Room 406

(The Environment and Public Works Committee Hearing Room)

AGENDA

- 1) The connection between chemical exposure and developmental disabilities
Bruce Lanphear, MD, MPH – Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Medical Center
- 2) Why the developmental disabilities community is concerned about chemical exposures
Joe Meadours, Director of Consumer Empowerment and Self-Advocate, Alabama Mental Health and Mental Retardation Department
- 3) Autism rates and personal experience as a mother of an autistic child
Laura Hewitson, PhD – University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine
- 4) The Promise of the National Children’s Study
Leonardo Trasande, MD, MPP – Assistant Director of the Center for Children’s Health and the Environment, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine
- 5) How can we make chemicals child-safe?
Lynn Goldman, MD, MPH – Johns Hopkins University

This Briefing is being hosted by the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR), the Learning Disabilities Association’s Healthy Children Project (LDA), and the Learning and Developmental Disability Initiative (LDDI) - with support from members of the Developmental Disabilities Network: the American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR), The Arc of the United States, the Association of University Centers on Disability (AUCD), the Developmental Disabilities Research Centers Associations, Easter Seals, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), the National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC), United Cerebral Palsy, and the United Cerebral Palsy Research and Educational Foundation.