

## House Republican Press Release

January 29, 2007  
Press Office: 860-240-8700

### **REPS. KLARIDES, ROWE INTRODUCE LEGISLATION TO “GREEN” SCHOOLS, PROTECT SCHOOLCHILDREN**



HARTFORD- State Representatives Themis Klarides (R-Derby) and T.R. Rowe (R-Trumbull) have introduced legislation to protect local schoolchildren. House Bill 5355, An Act Concerning Toxic Cleaning Products In Schools, has been submitted to the Legislature’s Education Committee.

Health authorities have indicated that exposure to certain toxic cleaning chemicals used in school buildings can lead to serious health ailments. The Legislation would prohibit the use of any cleaning product containing a toxic substance inside an elementary school building. Measures are currently in place in New York and New Jersey via an executive order from their respective governors. Governor M. Jodi Rell has approved a similar order, which affects state agencies and institutions of higher education. HB 5355 would place comparable restrictions into our state statutes and extend these protections to elementary and secondary schoolchildren.

According to data from the Federal Environmental Protection Agency, traditional cleaning products can contain harmful chemicals that can cause cancer, reproductive disorders, major organ damage, and permanent eye damage. Other common health problems associated with cleaning chemicals include asthma and other respiratory ailments, headaches, dizziness, and fatigue.

“We’ve become more and more aware that the types of household cleaners used in schools contain toxic chemicals,” said Rep. Rowe. “These chemicals have long term health effects on the majority of the population and perhaps most of all on children. We now have the option of using non-toxic or ‘green’ products, which work just as well and do not cost more. It makes sense to incorporate their use in our schools, where our children spend so much of their time.”

Rep. Rowe added that he has spoken with school administrators in his own district of Trumbull, who are beginning the process of switching to the use of ‘green’ cleaning products. However, the town is one of very few in Connecticut that are currently doing so.

“There are many bills before the Legislature that would not have a clear impact—this is not one of them,” said Rep. Klarides. “We now have far more information regarding the

effects of cleaning products than what was available in the past. Chemicals that are proven to be harmful simply should not be allowed to endanger our schoolchildren.”

The Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology at Hackensack University Medical Center in New Jersey is one of the first hospital-based programs whose specific mission is to identify, control and ultimately prevent exposures to environmental factors that may cause adult, and especially pediatric cancer, as well as other health problems with our children. The center has made significant strides in raising awareness among lawmakers about the potential hazards of cleaning chemicals to indoor air quality.

“It makes common sense to eliminate where possible any exposure a child might have to something that is toxic and we know that cleaning products are very harmful and commonly contain carcinogens, neurotoxins and teratogens,” said founder Deidre Imus. “We have been successful at the Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology implementing our Greening the Cleaning program in schools. We've proven schools can easily implement non-toxic cleaning products while saving them money and they also work as well if not better than the toxic alternative.”