



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association In Opposition to:
LD 2116: An Act to Require Flame-retardant Seats on New School Buses**

Joint Standing Committee on Transportation
State House, Room 126
Thursday, February 1, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator Chipman, Representative Crafts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation. My name is Rebecca Boulos. I am a resident of South Portland, and executive director of Maine Public Health Association. MPHA is in opposition to LD 2116: “An Act to Require Flame-retardant Seats on New School Buses.”

MPHA is the state’s oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 700 individual members and 60 organizations across the state. MPHA works to optimize the health of people and places in Maine through advocacy, education, partnerships, and public health workforce development. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine’s communities, and we take that responsibility seriously.

Flame retardants contain several chemicals that are [toxic to human health](#). Commonly used chemical flame retardants are associated with increased risk for cancer, poor neurobehavioral health in children, hormone disruption, thyroid disorders, and obesity. Chlorinated Tris compounds including TDCPP and TCEP, as well as antimony trioxide have been designated as carcinogens. PBDEs, HBCD, and TBBPA are persistent toxic chemicals that also harm the environment. [Studies have shown](#) that children’s exposure to flame retardants is higher than adults; and children are more vulnerable to the health harms because their brain and other organs are still developing.

In relation to school bus safety standards, there are already federal safety standards in place under the U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Standard No. 302, “Flammability of Interior Materials,” specifies that the horizontal burn rate of certain specified materials (e.g., seat cushions and seat backs) may not exceed four inches per minute.

Given the human and environmental health risks associated with exposure to flame retardants, minimization of exposure, especially for children, must be a priority. We respectfully request you to please vote LD 2116 “Ought Not to Pass.” Thank you for considering our testimony.