



# MASSACHUSETTS MEDICAL SOCIETY

*Every physician matters, each patient counts.*

## TESTIMONY REGARDING TOXIC-FREE KIDS BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE April 29, 2025

The Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS) is a professional association of over 24,000 physicians, residents, and medical students across all clinical disciplines, organizations, and practice settings. The Medical Society is committed to advocating on behalf of patients, to give them a better health care system, and on behalf of physicians, to help them provide the best care possible. The prevalence and persistence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in toys, drinking water, air, oil and animals, represents a risk to the health of Massachusetts residents and especially children. For that reason, the **Medical Society wishes to be recorded in support of H.384/S.195, An Act relative to toxic-free kids**. This bill would meaningfully reduce children's exposure to PFA chemicals by prohibiting the sale or distribution of children's products with intentionally added PFAS.

PFAS are widely used, long-lasting chemicals, components of which break down very slowly over time. PFAS are found in water, air, fish, and soil. Due to their widespread use and their persistence in the environment, many PFAS are found in the blood of people and animals across the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world. Exposure to PFAS can have detrimental health effects as noted by Dr. Joseph Braun in the New England Journal of Medicine:

Past and current PFAS exposures pose threats to human health. In addition to their persistence in the environment, many PFAS linger in people's blood for years after exposure. Nearly all Americans have detectable levels of PFAS in their blood. Americans are exposed to PFAS in their food, drinking water, and indoor and outdoor dust and air. Epidemiologic and toxicologic studies have linked PFAS to some cancers, elevated cholesterol, impaired vaccine response, thyroid dysfunction, liver disease, reduced birth weight, and premature death, with no level of exposure being considered safe. Particularly concerning are the health effects of exposure that occurs during gestation or early childhood, which may not manifest until years later and can include reduced immune responses to vaccines, lower bone mass, and cardiometabolic disease.

H.384/S.195 would regulate chemicals in children's products, by prohibiting PFAS. The bill bans the sale or distribution of children's products with intentionally added PFAS and mandates the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to measure PFAS content and compile a list of toxic chemicals identified as carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, and other harmful classifications of concern, updated at least every three years. Additionally, manufacturers must report any use of these chemicals above de minimis levels in their products, with reports being publicly accessible. Manufacturers are also required to remove or substitute these chemicals within three years.



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Children's developing nervous systems are especially vulnerable to the internal chemical environment. Growing evidence shows associations between exposure to environmental agents and neurotoxic damage to children. Studies of animals and children show that toxic agents can create subtle changes in the concentrations of hormones in children, changes that can produce profound and permanent changes in their developing nervous systems. These changes can lead to impairment in mental performance and alterations of the reproductive system.

**We therefore ask the Committee to report H.384/S.195 out favorably.** Thank you very much for your consideration of these important issues. We appreciate the opportunity to offer these comments.