

Breast Cancer Fund Statement in Opposition to H.R. 2576

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Breast Cancer Fund Statement in Opposition to Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act” – H.R. 2576

Statement of Jeanne Rizzo, R.N., President and CEO of the Breast Cancer Fund

The Breast Cancer Fund stands in opposition to H.R. 2576, the “Frank R. Lautenberg Chemical Safety for the 21st Century Act,” which will be voted on by both houses of Congress this week. Despite three years of intense negotiation by chemical industry and other trade lobbyists versus environmental health and justice advocates, socially responsible businesses, and major medical and health associations; this legislation does not meet the promise of federal chemicals management policy capable of fully protecting the public health from unsafe chemical exposures linked to increasing rates of breast cancer and other diseases.

H.R. 2576 would:

- Roll back the states’ ability to enact legislation to protect their citizens from hazardous chemical exposures.
- Roll back the EPA’s ability to regulate toxic chemicals in imported consumer goods.
- Potentially limit the EPA’s ability to use the most valid and current science to gauge the safety of chemicals.
- Continue to violate our right-to-know the identity of the chemicals we are exposed to, even when health and safety studies show potential harm from the chemical.

While falling short of its ultimate goal to provide the EPA with the statutory authority it needs to effectively regulate chemicals in commerce, the tremendous advocacy effort by the Breast Cancer Fund and hundreds of other nonprofit environmental health advocacy organizations resulted in legislation that does make progress over current law in certain areas, including a health-based safety standard that removes cost as a consideration when determining if a chemical is safe; protections for vulnerable populations; and a mechanism that makes it easier for the EPA to require companies to substantiate the safety of their chemicals. Despite these improvements, the key flaws listed above are core to our opposition.

Enormous effort and resources were committed to making this legislation better. Working with environmental health colleagues, coalition partners and a handful of courageous members of Congress, we made this bill as strong as we could, but still could not accomplish all that was needed to ensure, in the end, that public health will trump chemical industry profit. Negotiating a bill in this Congress that is destined to land on the President’s desk required a high level of compromise that fell short of providing the protection the American public needs and deserves. While Congress may have to compromise, the Breast Cancer Fund and our colleagues and supporters from across the country will not compromise on the principle of fully protecting the public from exposure to toxic chemicals. Over the coming years, the Breast Cancer Fund will continue to work vigilantly to ensure proper implementation of this legislation and to strengthen this and other federal chemical management laws to ensure the full and robust protection of public health.

The Breast Cancer Fund is the leading national organization working to prevent breast cancer by eliminating our exposure to toxic chemicals linked to the disease. www.breastcancerfund.org