



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

TOXIC CHEMICALS SHOULD BE CONTROLLED TO PREVENT DIMINISHED HEALTH THAT CAN RESULT IN DISABILITY

The Toxic Substance Control Act of 1976 should be revisited to provide Americans greater protection from toxic chemicals that diminish health and result in disability.

The House of Representatives' Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Trade and Consumer Protections held an oversight hearing on the Toxic Substance Control Act of 1976 (TSCA). Presenters at the forum were representatives from the chemical industries, members from the General Accountability Office, researchers, policy experts and consumer advocates for effective public health policies.

Summary

There are 80,000 chemicals for which the toxic content is unknown. Thus, there are unidentified toxic chemicals in products and the environment that have not been identified and appropriately regulated, and these chemicals can adversely affect the health of Americans. In addition, there are 700 new chemicals introduced each year. Classified information masks risks to the public. If there are no data there is no risk. One of the problems that prevent control of lethal toxic materials in the U.S. is that the burden of proof that materials and products are toxic rests on the public rather than business. This is not the case in Europe.

Disability Prevention Issue

Unregulated and inadequate control of toxic materials can have a devastating effect by diminishing the health of individuals and contributing to disability. In testimony at the hearing, witnesses noted that uncontrolled toxins in chemicals and chemical products, to which young children are exposed, can have an adverse affect on their neurodevelopment, potentially leading to disability. Children are particularly vulnerable to toxic materials which are found in the schools. There is a need to reform TSCA to protect the public from toxic substances. Regulation of the chemistry industry and a need for passage of the Kids-Safe Bill for TSCA reform is critical.

Intervention

A letter was written to the Chairman of the Energy and Commerce subcommittee on Trade and Consumer Protections to comment on the hearings from the disability prevention, and public health perspective.

Recommendation

The Toxic Substance Control Act of 1976 should be revisited to provide greater protection to Americans from toxic chemicals that diminish health and result in disability.