



## MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

### *The Child Safe Playing Fields Act*

A.7937a- Englebright

S.4983a- Foley

**An act** to amend the environmental conservation law and the education law, to ban the use of aesthetic pesticide application on school and day care grounds.

#### JUSTIFICATION

Pesticides are used outside at most schools in New York State, even with no evidence of need. A study by a previous NYS Attorney General indicated that 87% of schools use dangerous pesticides.

The growing body of peer-reviewed scientific evidence indicates that pesticide exposure can adversely affect a child's neurological, respiratory, immune, and endocrine system, even at low levels. Long-term exposure to pesticides has also been linked to cancer. Short-term exposure can lead to headaches, dizziness, nausea, seizures, respiratory problems, and asthma attacks. Despite this evidence, pesticides remain in widespread use in school buildings and on school grounds throughout NYS. *To help protect our kids, NYS should ban the use of pesticides on outdoor school grounds for grades K-12, as well as day care centers.*

**Pesticides disproportionately hurt our children.** Children are uniquely vulnerable to pesticide exposures due to their physiology and rapid growth, and also because of their closer proximity to these pesticides during normal play. Children are also more susceptible to exposure due to their common hand to mouth activities. Leading medical experts continue to urge us to reduce pesticide use as much as possible, especially on lawns and playing fields.

**Effective and affordable alternatives exist.** There is clear science showing that pests and weeds can be successfully managed with readily available and affordable non-toxic alternatives, while meeting people's aesthetic expectations. Numerous municipalities, school districts, individual schools, and some states have chosen to adopt policies that require a school to prohibit the use of toxic pesticides. Time and time again, schools that have eliminated toxic pesticide use are reporting effective pest management and significant long-term financial savings.

Over>>>

**Pesticides adversely impact wildlife and our environment.** Pesticides are implicated in the death of millions of birds annually. The pesticides also end up in groundwater, estuaries, rivers and lakes. Recent research has shown that even in minute amounts, these chemicals can have a profoundly negative impact on aquatic life.

***Banning of non-essential pesticides on outdoor school grounds will help protect the health of our children, and can be done with no fiscal impact to the state and with no adverse financial impact to schools.***

### **SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS**

- All school and day care playgrounds, turf, athletic & playing fields, and the surrounding grounds will be pesticide-free.
- The law is applicable for public, private, or parochial school and board of cooperative educational services. The law is also applicable to all day care centers and head start day care centers.
- The Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, and the Commissioner of Health shall develop guidance on pesticide alternatives to facilitate compliance.
- An emergency application of pesticides may be applied, if determined by the County Health Department, the Commissioner of Health, the Commissioner of Environmental Conservation, or in the case of a public school, the School Board.

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**CITIZENS CAMPAIGN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (CCE)  
STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE ADOPTION OF THE  
*CHILD SAFE PLAYING FIELDS ACT*  
(A.7937a-ENGLEBRIGHT / S.4983a-FOLEY)**

*Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) is an 80,000 member, non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization working to protect public health and the natural environment in New York and Connecticut.*