

Safe Chemicals Act of 2013

The Safe Chemicals Act of 2013 would protect Americans from toxic chemicals that are found in everyday consumer products. Right now, the average American has more than 200 industrial chemicals in their body, including dozens linked to cancer, developmental problems, and other diseases.

Unfortunately, the existing law regulating the safety of these chemicals—the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)—is so broken that in 2009 the Government Accountability Office (GAO) placed it on its list of “high risk” areas of the law. Under current law, chemicals do not need to be proved safe before they enter commerce and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is limited in its ability to require testing or restrict unsafe chemicals. As a result, EPA has only been able to require testing for about 200 of the more than 84,000 chemicals in commerce, and has banned only five, since TSCA was enacted in 1976.

Strong National Support for Safer Chemicals

Recent polling shows strong support across the country for reforming TSCA to better protect Americans from toxic chemicals:

- 77 percent of Americans support TSCA reform legislation, according to a recent poll by Republican firm Public Opinion Strategies: http://pos.org/documents/12368_national_key_findings_final.pdf
- 75 percent of small business owners support stronger regulations on toxic chemicals: <http://asbcouncil.org/toxic-chemicals-poll>

In addition, the Safe Chemicals Act is supported by a broad coalition of parents, public health, labor, business, and environmental organizations, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Nurses Association, the American Public Health Association, the United Steelworkers, and Moms Rising.

The Safe Chemicals Act of 2013 – Key Provisions

The Safe Chemicals Act would require chemicals to be proven safe before they wind up in our stores, our homes, and our bodies, while fostering innovation and enhancing the competitiveness of the U.S. chemical industry. Specifically, the Safe Chemicals Act:

- Creates a risk-based system to screen chemicals for safety, using existing and new test data.
- Gives EPA authority to implement a wide range of risk management tools to protect public health when certain chemicals, or uses of those chemicals, are found to be unsafe.
- Encourages the development of safer alternatives to existing chemicals, protects confidential business information, and establishes regular chemical use reporting.

In the 112th Congress, the Safe Chemicals Act (S. 847) was sponsored by 30 Senators and was reported favorably out of the Environment and Public Works Committee in July 2012.