

PRESS RELEASE

... from the Illinois House of Representatives

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May Passes Three Bills for Health and Environment

SPRINGFIELD – State Rep. Karen May (D-Highland Park) set a personal record Wednesday when she passed three bills out of the House that will help cancer patients who cannot afford their medications, improve air quality in public schools and reduce mercury contamination in soil and water.

“These are important bills for the health and safety of our children and for the families of Illinois,” said May. “To have all three pass in one afternoon session is truly gratifying.”

May’s triathlon day in the House began with legislation to create a cancer-drug repository. House Bill 813 will allow cancer patients or their families to donate unused prescription drugs still in their original, sealed packaging and more than six months before their expiration date back to a pharmacy. The pharmacies who voluntarily participate in the program will make the medication available to other needy eligible cancer patients with a prescription for the drug.

May then passed two bills aimed at improving the health and development of children, House Bill 895, the Green Cleaning Schools Act, and House Bill 943, the Mercury-Added Product Prohibition Act. The Green Cleaning Schools Act will require all elementary and secondary schools in Illinois to purchase environmentally sensitive cleaning supplies that do not expose students and teachers to harmful chemicals. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that half of all students, teachers and school staff are exposed to polluted indoor air that may be five to 100 times more polluted than outdoor air. The chemicals found in everyday cleaning supplies cause much of this pollution.

“Years ago, we had the wisdom to ban lead-based paints because of their potential to impair a child’s mental abilities,” said May. “Given the fact that children spend hours every day in a classroom and that effective, non-toxic cleaning supplies are readily available, this is the next logical step toward making sure that our children grow up in a healthy environment.”

Finally, House Bill 943 expands on current laws limiting mercury from coal plants and auto switches by banning the sale or distribution of medical devices that contain mercury, including blood pressure cuffs. Such devices account for twenty-eight percent of the mercury pollution created each year, and this bill will move Illinois into position to have the strictest mercury pollution laws in the United States. It is expected that this ban will cause medical device manufacturers to reach a tipping point whereby it is more economically feasible to manufacture mercury free products for use in the United States.

House Bills 813, 895, and 943 now await action in the Senate. For more information, visit www.ilga.gov, or contact May at (847) 433-9100.

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