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October 1, 2007

Representative Tom Brinkman, Chairman
Commerce and Labor Committee
Ohio House of Representatives
3215 Hardisty Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45208

Dear Chairman Brinkman and Members of the Commerce and Labor Committee:

I am writing to urge the passage of Ohio House Bill 230. This bill will protect children from the unnecessary, harmful effects of tanning parlor radiation, which is more harmful than sun radiation.

Young people should not be exposed to tanning bed radiation. Because of their age, their skin is particularly susceptible to radiation, and many harmful health effects have been documented as results of such radiation exposure. It is known to play a role in skin cancers, premature skin aging, formation of cataracts in the eye, immune system suppression and photosensitive drug reactions, as well as aggravating a number of chronic diseases.

However, tanning is widely promoted as both a healthy behavior (a clear misrepresentation) and as being in style. During adolescence, many young people experience peer pressure, and sales pressure, to use tanning salons. It would send a powerful message about the dangers of tanning to prevent unscrupulous tanning salons from providing their services to minors.

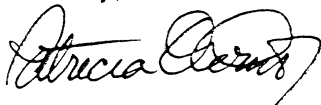
Eighty percent of harmful radiation occurs prior to age 18. Unfortunately, we are all being exposed to more dangerous radiation from the natural environment. It is wrong to add to that exposure through tanning bed use, which would be completely avoided if people understood its connection to the diseases it causes.

Finally, all of this exposure is dramatically increasing the incidence of skin cancers. These are disfiguring and costly *preventable* diseases. We all pay, through our insurance and taxes, to treat and care for those who develop the diseases that result from excessive radiation.

I come from a family of fair-skinned people. When we were young, people didn't understand the long-term effects of sunburns. My two sisters and I, and many of our cousins, all have dermatologists, and we have sun-damaged lesions removed twice a year. Imagine the additional damage and expense if we had also been going to tanning salons twice a week because it seemed cool. Now we understand the dangers of tanning bed radiation, and we should act to prevent it in children, and discourage it for everyone else.

I would appreciate your support of House Bill 230. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Patricia O'Connor, Ph.D.