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## LAUTENBERG INTRODUCES BILL TO PROTECT SCHOOL CHILDREN FROM EFFECTS OF HARMFUL PESTICIDES

WASHINGTON, D.C. – United States Senator Frank R. Lautenberg introduced today the School Environment Protection Act (SEPA). The legislation will help protect children, families, and school staff from exposure to harmful chemicals in school buildings and on school grounds by implementing integrated pest management programs designed to require less, if any, chemical pesticide application.

**“Children have the right to learn in healthy surroundings,”** said Senator Lautenberg. **“Parents and guardians have the right to know whether their children are being exposed to toxic chemicals and take any steps they feel appropriate to keep them safe.”**

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), children face higher risks than adults from pesticides because their systems are still developing, and therefore not as capable of detoxification. Pesticide exposure can adversely affect a child’s neurological, respiratory, immune, and endocrine systems and has been linked to exacerbated asthma symptoms. In July of this year, the Journal of the American Medical Association released a study which confirmed that pesticide exposure at schools causes acute illnesses in school employees and students.

**“I sincerely hope that Congress finally acts on this important issue,”** said Senator Lautenberg. **“We must take the advice of scientists, especially considering the ever-growing body of knowledge concerning the effects of harmful chemicals on children, and pass the School Environment Protection Act.”**

SEPA would encourage schools to use techniques that attempt to move away from chemical pesticides where possible, that are proven to be safe and effective, and that involve proper timing and notification of students, families, and school employees in cases when pesticides cannot be avoided.

A similar version of this bill passed unanimously in the Senate as an amendment to the No Child Left Behind in the 107<sup>th</sup> Congress; however, it was stripped out during final negotiations. This legislation is a companion bill to Congressman Rush Holt’s School Environment Protection Act (SEPA) in the House.