

Center for Health, Environment & Justice; Moms Rising

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
September 2, 2009

Contact:
Moira Bulloch
703-237-2249 ext. 19
mbulloch@chej.org

Ten Thousand Parents Say No to Toxic School Supplies

Parents Petition Retailers to Take PVC School Supplies Off Store Shelves

Falls Church, VA – Parents across the country are banding together to give their children a safe back-to-school sendoff this morning by keeping toxic school supplies out of children’s backpacks and organizing to keep those toxic binders and lunchboxes off of store shelves. Under the leadership of the Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ) and MomsRising, over 10,000 parents have organized to petition retailers to take polyvinyl chloride (PVC) school supplies off store shelves.

Polyvinyl chloride (PVC or vinyl) is the most toxic type of plastic and can expose children to phthalates, lead, cadmium and other toxic chemicals. Over 90% of phthalates are used in PVC products. While now banned in children’s toys, phthalates are still commonly found in children’s school supplies made of PVC. In August, the Center for Health, Environment & Justice released a [PVC-Free Back to School Guide](#) to educate parents on the dangers of PVC in notebooks and lunchboxes and to empower parents to make safer choices.

“Parents can protect their children by choosing safe alternatives to PVC, one product at a time. But if we are to ensure that every child has a healthy start to the school year, we need retailers to take PVC school supplies off of their shelves,” said Mike Schade, CHEJ’s PVC Campaign Coordinator.

"Last year, we succeeded in getting legislation passed to ban phthalates from being used in the manufacture of children's toys, but these dangerous chemicals are still being used in children's schools supplies," said MomsRising President Joan Blades. "The health effects of phthalates, which, along with many other toxins, are present in PVC, range from birth defects to a variety of cancers. These chemicals aren't safe for children and should not be in any product intended for kids. MomsRising is proud to join forces with the Center for Health, Environment and Justice to help parents avoid products containing these potentially harmful chemicals."

Several large retailers have already recognized the threat that PVC plastics pose to consumers and have promised to phase out PVC products and packaging. But for concerned parents, this is not enough. Parents are calling on retailers to offer concrete plans to phase out the use of PVC in school supplies and to label PVC-free options.

View the petitions at: http://salsa.democracyinaction.org/o/852/t/2088/petition.jsp?petition_KEY=2066 and http://momsrising.democracyinaction.org/o/1768/t/1878/petition.jsp?petition_KEY=1928

About CHEJ

The Center for Health, Environment & Justice exists to mentor the movement to build healthier communities by empowering people to prevent harm in as many ways, and for as many people, as possible. We believe this can happen when people and groups have the power to play an integral role in promoting human health and environmental integrity. CHEJ's role is to provide the tools, the direction, and the encouragement to these people and groups, so that they can build strong, healthy communities where they live, work, learn, shop, play and pray. Following her successful effort to prevent further harm for the people living in contaminated Love Canal, Lois Gibbs founded CHEJ in 1981 in order to continue mentoring others seeking to prevent harm. CHEJ provides mentoring assistance to communities, homeowners, families and individuals throughout the country. To date, CHEJ has assisted over 10,000 groups nationwide. Currently, CHEJ is mentoring community groups in Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Ohio. Details on CHEJ's efforts to help people and communities prevent harm can be found at <http://chej.org/>.