

Chairman Hawkins and member of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to share my experiences with indoor tanning. I urge you to support House Bill 2369 to protect all children and teens.

I am a mother of two teenage daughters. The pressure to look good is always high with teens. It was in the 90's when I was a teenager and I assume it was with every other decade. My girls and their friends want to look their best- especially if they are going to a dance, a party or one of their cheer competitions. Being "pale" is a huge insecurity with most females. It especially is with my girls. I even feel better when I have a tan color beaming off my skin. One battle I have had with both of my girls is tanning. They both know that they have to paste a SPF of 50+ before they go outside to protect them from the harmful rays. But when the fall and winter roll around and outside tanning isn't an option... they start to beg me to let them go to a tanning bed. I have a huge problem with tanning beds. I grew up in the 90's where we would tan every day. My mom tanned, my grandma tanned and many of our friends tanned. Now at the age of 41, I have had a total of 6 moles removed that were caused from tanning beds. **I have many friends that have had melanoma caused from tanning beds. Unfortunately, that doesn't mean much to a teenager. They think they are invincible and it will never happen to them.**

My daughter – who was 15 years old at the time – went behind my back with one of her friends and went to a tanning bed. The place allowed her to tan and to purchase a package without a parent's permission. **After her first tan there she was told by one of the employees that she could go to their other location and tan again, in the same day, for free.** Thank God she didn't take her up on that offer. She later told me about the tanning experience. I was so upset and to think they had advised her to go two times in one day!

I also have a 12 year old daughter. She feels pressure to be tan as well. She is in competitive cheerleading and has multiple competitions and most take place over the fall and winter. She has asked me multiple times to let her go get a tan in a tanning bed for her upcoming competition. Her cheer coaches suggest, "that they get tan so they look better on stage." They say spray tans look orange and the tanning beds give a better more real tan. Some of the other cheerleaders tell the kids who don't get a tan that they look pale and they don't look good on stage. So I battle with that.

As a mother of these two teens, I suggest we get stronger rules for tanning beds! I do not want my kids or anyone using those cancer causing coffins! Raising the age to tan would be huge cancer preventative. There are so many families that are not aware of the damage a tanning bed can do and allow their children to use tanning beds. I know very young girls that do pageants, competitive dance, gymnastics and other activities that use tanning beds weekly. If the age limit was forced for tanning beds, it would save lives, if not multiple future melanoma removal procedures.

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