

# "Reformed" chemical law unnecessary but relatively toothless

By ACSH Staff — May 23, 2013

[Chemicals safe?](#) Unknown

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After years of trying, Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) has at last got the law he has championed for a decade or more: reform of 1976 s Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). After months of negotiation with Sen. David Vitter (R-LA), the two announced a [grand compromise](#) [2], and lo and behold, the Chemical Safety Improvement Act seems to be a done deal.

In fact, the 1976 law seemed to have been working quite well for the past 37 years; the environmentalists (actually agenda-driven activist groups) who wanted it reformed used the fact that only a handful of chemicals had been regulated under that law since its passage as evidence that it was not enforced enough, and was therefore too weak. They neglected the obvious reason why so few chemicals had been banned or restricted: trace levels of chemicals in our environment are not harmful, not toxic, not carcinogenic. There have been a few bad actors among chemicals in consumer products but these were weeded out decades ago, having been investigated and evidence actually found of danger to people. The current targets of activist groups BPA, phthalates, flame-retardants, pesticides have no substantial evidence of harm to humans (including babies and pregnant women) or the environment; the concern is all hyped-up fantasy designed to generate baseless chemophobia and get converts and donations to the groups supplying the hype. And it worked!

Well, it sort-of worked. ACSH s Dr. Gilbert Ross had this perspective: The enviro-activists get to trumpet TSCA Reform from their soap-boxes alongside their media allies. But in essence, the compromises were mainly made by the anti-chemical groups, while the chemical industry got most of what they wanted, and (more importantly) little of what they did not want, in the new proposal. So, it s a win-win, except that a law that was doing its job will be jettisoned and a brand-new law will come into force. Don t think that groups such as NRDC and EWG and their ilk won t be calling for CSIA Reform in a few years, though.

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## Links

[1] <http://hsdispatch.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Chemicals-safer.jpg>

[2] [http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/05/vitterlautenberg\\_announce\\_new.html](http://www.nola.com/politics/index.ssf/2013/05/vitterlautenberg_announce_new.html)