



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Elijah Reichlin-Melnick

## Senator Reichlin-Melnick and Assemblymember Galef Announce Signing of Their Bill to Protect Children and Families from Lead Exposure from Holiday Lights

ELIJAH REICHLIN-MELNICK December 16, 2021



**Ossining, NY** - State Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick and Assemblywoman Sandy Galef held a press conference this morning in front of the Christmas tree and holiday display in Ossining's Market Square to announce that their bill, A4522/S5675, had been signed by Governor Kathy Hochul on November 30 as Chapter 634 of the Laws of 2021. The new legislation requires seasonal and decorative lighting with electrical cord casings in which lead is present to have a warning label with explicit instructions to wash your hands after

handling the product.

Some decorative and seasonal holiday lights have been shown to contain lead, which is unsafe at any level in the human body. Several independent studies, which followed the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) standard wipe test to see how much lead would come off on someone's hands, revealed that some brands contained more than 30 times the levels regulators permit in children's products. One 2008 study published in the Journal of Environmental Health, found that nearly all the light sets tested had levels that surpassed the Environmental Protection Agency's limit for windowsills and floors.

Exposure to lead has been repeatedly proven to contribute to serious health problems including attacks on the brain and central nervous system, heart and kidney disease, reduced fertility, depression. Lead exposure has especially severe consequences for children. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), any concentration of lead in blood is dangerous. While federal law bans the sale and manufacture of lead in house paint and gasoline and New York has strict limits only on paint on children's toys and furniture and some glazed tableware, while the sale of most other consumer products containing lead in the state are not as strictly regulated.

Holiday and decorative lights, many of which are manufactured overseas, have lead applied to wire coverings to keep the plastic from cracking and act as a flame retardant. As lead is not readily absorbed through skin, the main worry regarding exposure stems from ingesting the traces that are left on the hands of a person after they have finished handling the lights.

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*Senator Elijah Reichlin-Melnick said, "Decorating for the holidays should never put your family's health at risk, but many decorative lighting products contain lead in quantities that*

*are harmful to both children and adults. Lead has been taken out of gasoline, paint, and dozens of other household products over the last several **decades because it is poisonous and does irreparable harm to developing minds.**"*

**Assemblywoman Sandy Galef** said, "I thank Senator Reichlin-Melnick for his collaboration on this common sense legislation that provides a simple solution to the threat of lead: a warning label with a reminder to wash one's hands after handling seasonal and decorative lights that contain the substance. It is so important to remember to wash hands after touching lead products because ingesting lead can lead to health problems in adults as well as developmental delays in children."

**Peter DeLucia, Assistant Commissioner of Public Health Westchester County**, said: "The holidays serve as a reminder to check the labels on decorations and toys for lead warnings. It is important to prevent children from putting small toys in their mouths, particularly when lead is present because ingesting lead can lead to developmental delays. Frequent hand-washing is another simple yet highly effective way to prevent the ingestion of lead. I thank Assemblywoman Galef and Senator Reichlin-Melnick for their efforts to pass this new law that requires warning labels with instructions to wash hands to be attached to holiday and decorative lights in which lead is present."

**Jazmine Dessaure, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Open Door Medical Center** said, "We always check lead levels in kids. The problem is systemic. Lead is on older toys, it's in houses without renovations. We see it often with learning disabilities. Parents don't know that lead is in these products. It's the holidays, we take the lights out and the ornaments or the menorah out and kids want to play with them, it's part of the fun of the season. It is so important to remember to wash hands after handling lead, and I thank the legislators for their attention to this issue."

## 2021-S5675A

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to the manufacture and sale of seasonal and decorative lighting products containing lead

March 15, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by [Elijah Reichlin-Melnick](#)

Do you support this bill?

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