

GREAT NECK STUDENTS AT WORK:

At a Penn Model Congress Conference , Alana Gross, of Great Neck North High School, was a member of the Environmental and Health Committee. GNBCC shared information with Alana in order to help her make the case to restrict the use of toxic pesticides for garden care and use safer alternatives instead. Alana recently shared her experience with GNBCC:

On March 25 – March 28, 2004, I attended the Penn Model Congress Conference with other students from Great Neck North High School. At this forum, I was a member of the Environmental and Health Committee. My assignment was to sit on this committee and present a Bill that I prepared over the course of several months. The title of my Bill was: “An Act to Prohibit the Use of Toxic Pesticides in Lawn Maintenance.” I am proud to state that my Bill passed unanimously and was enacted by Penn Model Congress.

The Bill contained the following information: I wrote that given the increased rate of breast cancer over the last decade, there has been evidence that links lawn pesticides to several cancers. Hazardous chemicals are routinely applied to lawns and gardens at an annual rate of 67 million pounds. And close to 50% of the reported pounds may contain suspected carcinogens. It is particularly disturbing that suburban gardens receive the largest amount per acre of these toxic chemicals.

The Sections of the Bill were written as follows:

Section 1: Congress shall restrict the use of those pesticides that have been shown to pose increase health risks to the public.

Section2: Congress shall provide public education awareness programs on healthy non-toxic methods and alternative products (i.e. corn gluten, organic fertilizers).

Section3: Congress must urge the EPA to require that pesticides registered for use in public areas be fully tested for potential human health risks (birth defects, genetic damage, neurological disorders, cancers and endocrine disruption).

Section 4: Violators of the Bill shall be subject to a monetary fine and business operations suspended. Revenues from these fines shall be used to develop safe alternatives for lawn maintenance.

The Bill was voted to take effect one year from the date of passage March 27, 2004)

I enjoyed presenting the Bill and providing such important information to the committee. I hope that one day our U.S. Legislators will be committed to this issue and enact a comparable Bill as we did at Penn Model Congress in 2004.

Please note that Alana Gross had tremendous foresight, since we now actually have a bill in New York State which would ban the use of toxic pesticides for aesthetic purposes for lawn and garden care. The bill is sponsored by Assembly Member Tom DiNapoli and Senator LaValle. The numbers of the bills are:

ASSEMBLY BILL A2460 (DiNapoli et al.)

SENATE BILL S908A (LaValle et al.)