

# Engaging Parents in Public Policy: MomsRising's Layer Cake Organizing Model

Beth Messersmith  
NC Campaign Director, MomsRising



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**Mamás Superándose**

# MomsRising Is.....



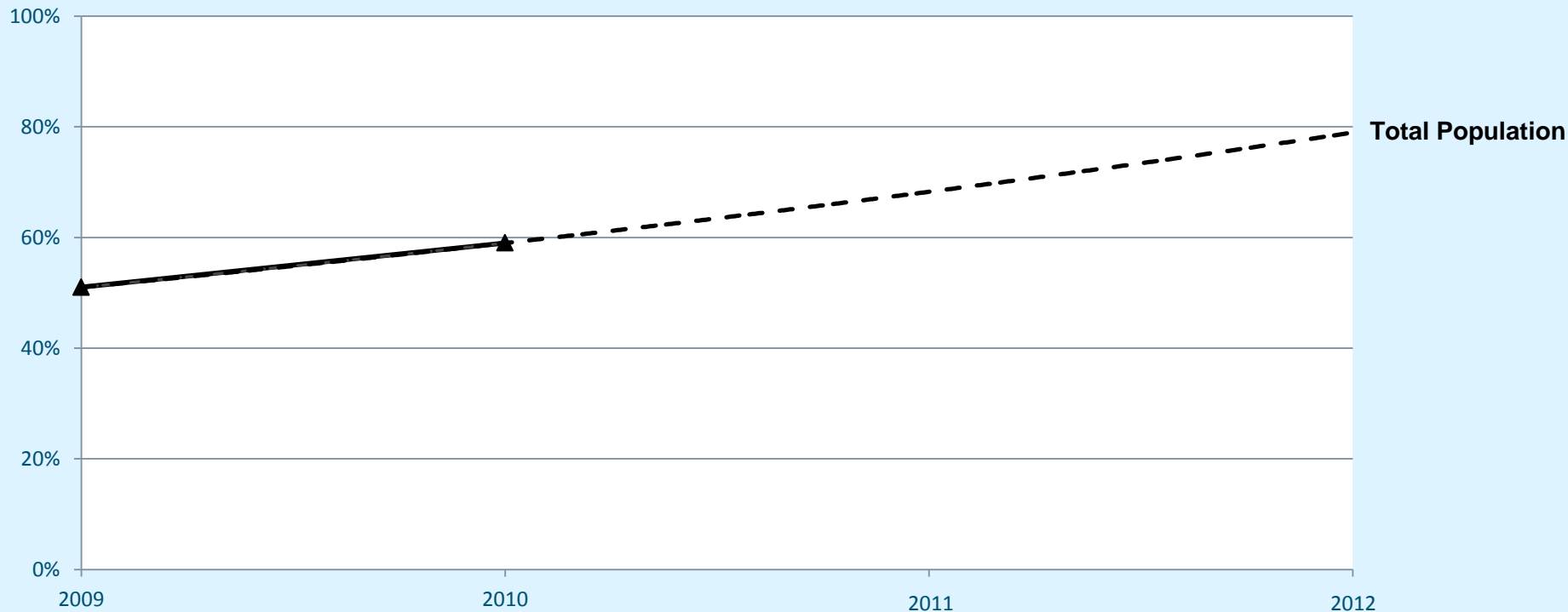
**MomsRising.org** is an online and on-the-ground grassroots organization of more than a million people who are working to achieve economic security for all families in the United States.

Established in 2006, MomsRising and its members are organizing and speaking out to improve public policy and to change the national dialogue on issues that are critically important to America's families. In 2010, Forbes named MomsRising's web site one of the "Top 100 Websites For Women."

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# Skyrocketing Online Participation

## Changes in Wireless Internet Use by Demographic Groups, 2009 to the Future

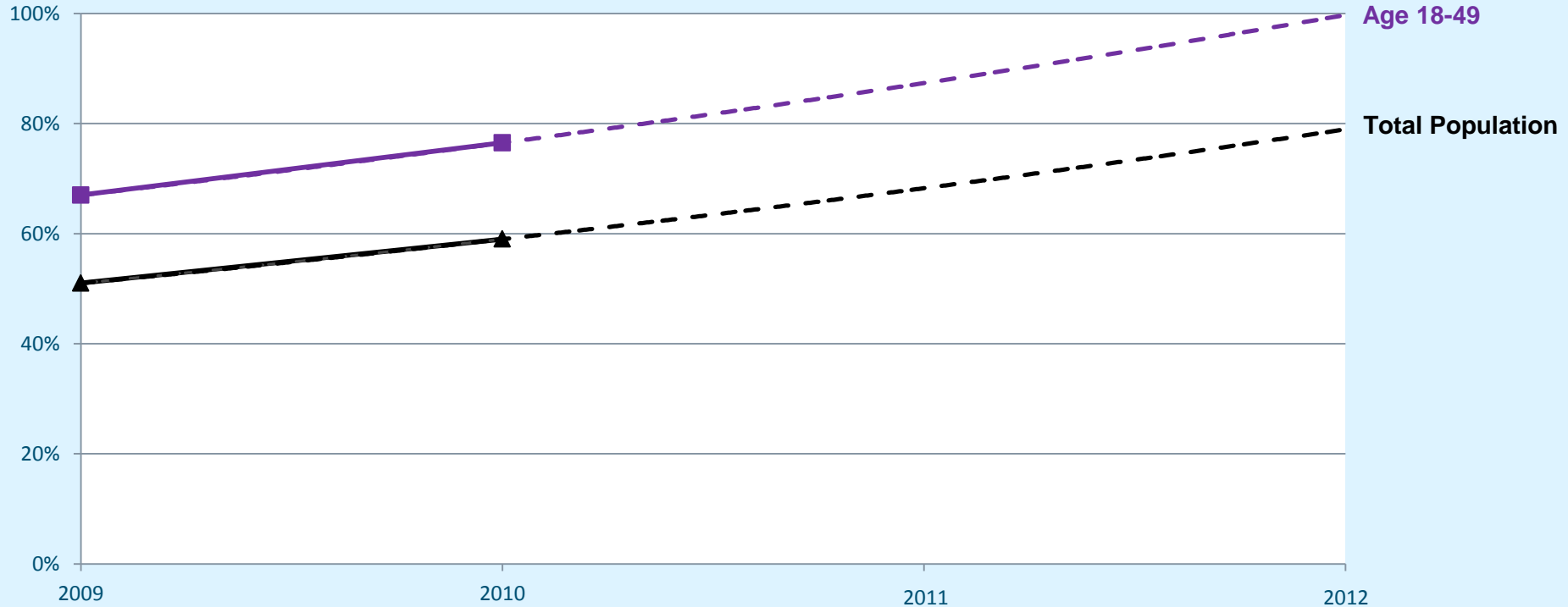


SOURCE: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Mobile-Access-2010.aspx>

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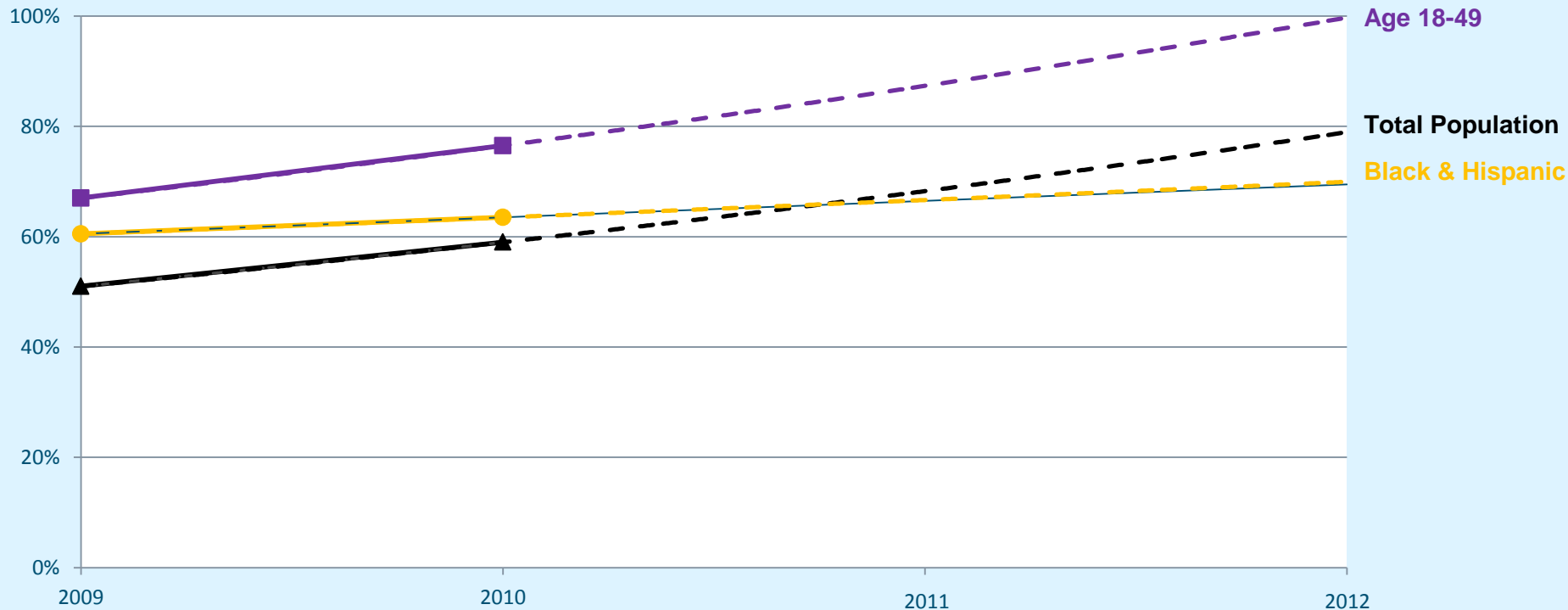


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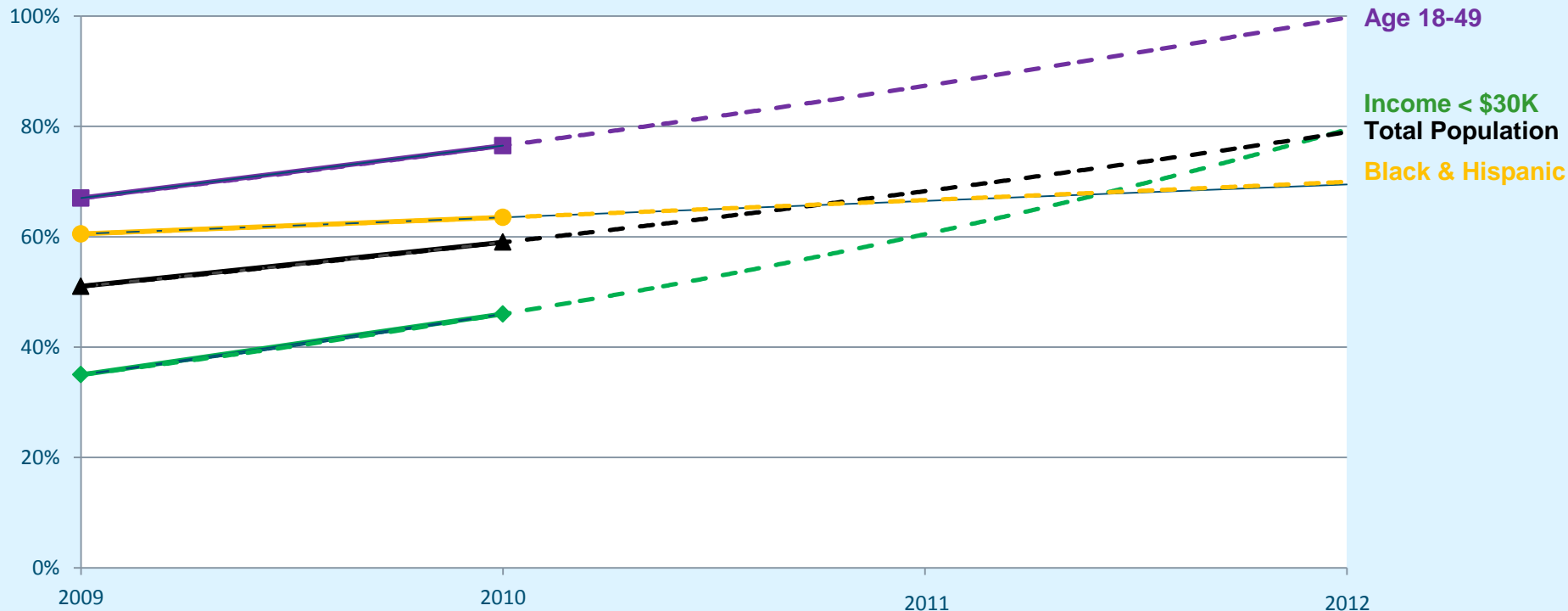


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# Skyrocketing Online Participation

## Changes in Wireless Internet Use by Demographic Groups, 2009 to the Future



SOURCE: <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Mobile-Access-2010.aspx>

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## The Recipe for “Layer Cake” Organizing

Have as many avenues for citizen engagement open as possible at the same time so that busy people can choose what they have the time to do in each given moment. In addition, many layers working together at the same time are often most effective. We call this “layer cake organizing”.



# 1. Synergistic Collaboration



Georgetown University Health Policy Institute

**Center for Children and Families**

**NCLR**  
NATIONAL COUNCIL OF LA RAZA

*The largest national Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, NCLR works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans*



**FamiliesUSA**

**The Voice for Health Care Consumers**

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Smart Start &  
The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc.



North Carolina Justice Center

*Opportunity and Prosperity for All*



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## 2. One-Click Member Advocacy

**We're going to the U.S. Capitol today -- back us up online!**

 **Donna, MomsRising.org** to me [show details](#) 7/23/09  [Reply](#)

Dear Julia,

In the fight for healthcare solutions, we're coming at 'em from every side. Yesterday we told you about holding meetings in Senators' home states, and today we need you to back us up online as we hand deliver MomsRising members' healthcare stories to Senators in their Washington D.C offices.

As Dr. Seuss would say, "from there to here, from here to there, we're everywhere!"

You can help us be even more everywhere--today, you can help from the comfort of your own home or desk! **Email a letter right now to your two U.S. Senators telling them to be on the lookout for MomsRising members, with healthcare story books and cute pacifiers in hand, at the U.S. Capitol today.** Urge them to read our collection of member stories and to ensure that healthcare solutions address the needs of families.

[http://momsrising.democracyinaction.org/o/1768/t/1546/campaign.jsp?campaign\\_KEY=27291](http://momsrising.democracyinaction.org/o/1768/t/1546/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=27291)

MomsRising members are heading to the Capitol TODAY.

**Send a letter to your U.S. Senators telling them to be on the lookout!**

**Take Action**

[Send a letter!](#)

# Stories Across the Nation

Click on a red thumbtack below to read the story of a MomsRising member near you:



# Online Forms Make Story Sharing Easy

**Moms1**

Where moms and people

[Home](#) [Take Action](#)

## Member

Is health care reform

Lawmakers and the  
who is now able to  
business that is bet  
credits? Or are you  
care coverage beca

Read member stories

[View Story](#)

## Share Your Story! [collapse](#)

### 1 Your Information

First Name:

Last Name:  
(optional)

E-mail:

Cell:

City:

State:

Zip:

### 2 Preferences & Terms of Use

☐

Please share the information I have provided above, and share my email address with the media and decision-makers.  
*(It's super important that we find people who can speak to the media.)*

☐

Please share the information I provided above with my email address and first

### 3 Your Story

Story Title:

Your Story:

Upload Photo:

[Browse](#)

[add more photos](#)

Post Video:

Copy and  
paste  
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### 3. “*Citizen Presence/Member Voice*” Proxy



**All Aboard!**  
**The NC Little Engine that Could for Kids**







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*"I was really skeptical when you started this train thing, but it's turned out to be a great idea. You all were really on to something and you did a great job marketing it. Everyone is talking about these little trains. If you'll notice, they're in almost all the offices regardless of party. It makes it seem real to people, that real people are paying attention."*

*"You certainly put faces and names on these cuts."*

*"I want to thank you and let you know how much I appreciate this effort and your dedication. Every one of your members that have come in here has been articulate, knowledgeable, and friendly. There hasn't been any ugliness even when you know that we disagree on things. There's a lot of sincerity from your people, and it makes you want to listen. So, thank you."*

## We're going to the U.S. Capitol today -- back us up online!



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**Take Action**

[Send a letter!](#)

## 4. *On-The-Ground Engagement*



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**The investments we make  
can help our children climb...  
or set them back.**



Join MomsRising for a "Chutes & Ladders" event  
to show support for investments in North Carolina's children!  
[www.momsrising.org/northcarolina](http://www.momsrising.org/northcarolina)



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“Give NC’s Kids a Hand” tile  
delivery-2009



Build our Future Giant Block  
Delivery-2010

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## The Power of ONEsie displays



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Sharing  
member stories  
as legislative  
testimony on  
the need for  
improved work/  
family balance  
policies

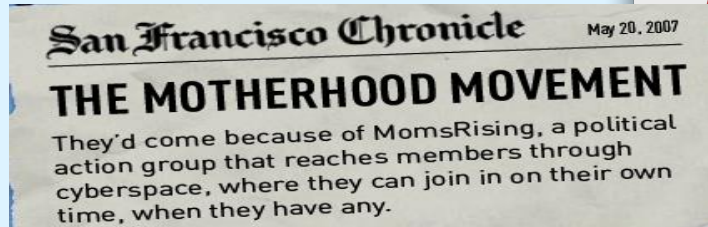


Meeting with Congressman  
Miller and Sen. Hagan's  
staff on health care reform



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# 5. Traditional and New Media, Public Education & Engagement



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Press conference on  
paid sick days

Media work at a  
budget rally



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Wednesday, February 23, 2011



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## ON JONES STREET- Public hearing on HHS budget

By: Loretta Boniti



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## Budgeting for kids

PUBLISHED THU, JUN 24, 2010 02:00 AM  
MODIFIED WED, JUN 23, 2010 06:06 PM

ARTICLE 0 COMMENTS

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Tags: news | opinion - mailbag

Your June 18 story "Campuses might not get to use shiny new facilities" highlighted the difficult budget choices facing legislators. While I empathize about new buildings sitting unused, I fear even more what cuts to programs serving children will do for the long-term health of our economy and residents.

Last week my kids and I joined other moms and preschoolers from MomsRising as we built a giant block tower outside the General Assembly. As moms, we've built lots of block towers and know that if you don't build the foundation strong, the tower will fall. Similarly, as a state we must protect the health and education programs that give kids a great start and a solid foundation.

A long weekend.  
Some good music.  
The tickle of adventure  
all around.  
It's feeling a lot  
like summer around here.

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http://www.newsobserver.com/2010/02/26/358315/a-chemical-that-shouldnt-be-in.html#storylink=miscarh

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## A chemical that shouldn't be in breast milk

PUBLISHED FRI, FEB 26, 2010 02:00 AM  
MODIFIED FRI, FEB 26, 2010 10:43 AM

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BY KRISTIE MATHER AND JESSICA NAKELL BURROUGHS  
Tags: [news](#) | [opinion - editorial](#) | [point of view](#)

DURHAM -- Last week, a friend e-mailed us a disturbing new scientific study titled "Younger mothers' breast milk has highest levels of flame retardants." According to researchers at the UNC School of Public Health, nearly three-quarters of 300 North Carolina mothers studied had some amount of toxic flame-retardants, known as polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs), in their breast milk.

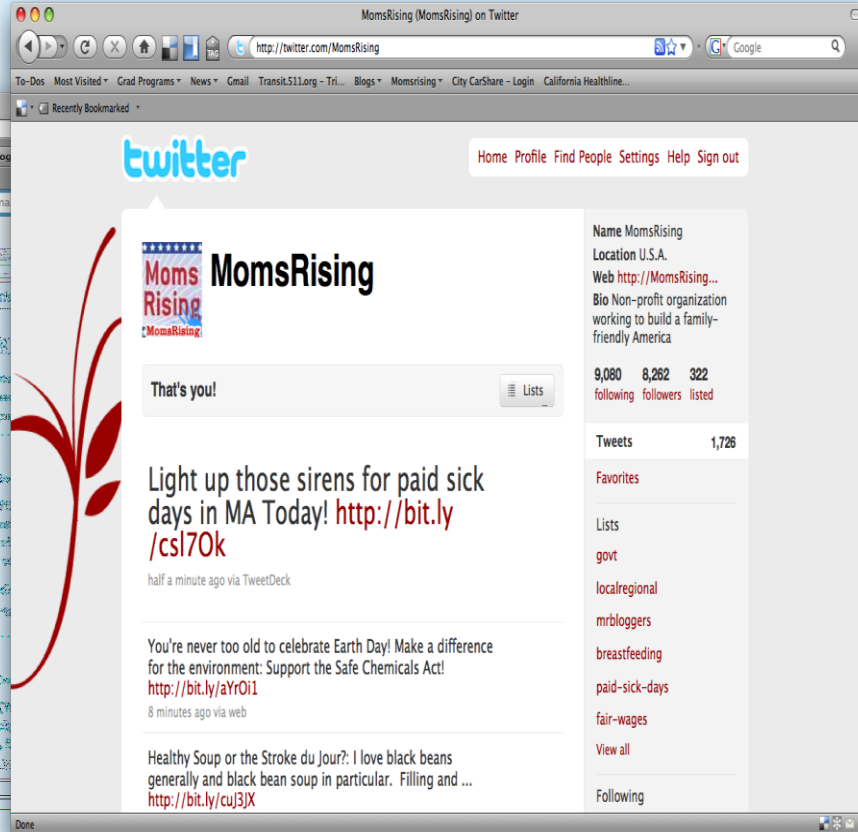
PBDEs are common flame-retardants used to slow the spread of fires. They are used in household products such as computers, televisions, mattresses and textiles. These chemicals, which have been

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A chemical that shouldn't be in breast milk - Other Views - NewsObserver.com#st

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# Engaging members with Blogs, Twitter, and Facebook



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MomsRising: Protecting our kids from toxins :: WRAL.com - Windows Internet Explorer

http://www.wral.com/lifestyles/goaskmom/blogpost/9457879/

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Green Guide

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**MomsRising: Protecting our kids from toxins**

By Judit Beres and Jessica Nakell Burroughs of MomsRising

Posted: April 26

Tags: Activities, Health and Safety, Mom's Life, Parenting

Summer is right around the corner, along with hot, sunshine-drenched days. If you're like most people, you will head over to your local store and buy sunscreen, probably choosing the kind with the highest UVA/UVB rating.

Unknowingly, however, you'll also get something you didn't bargain for - a "healthy" dose of oxybenzone and vitamin A (retinyl palmitate). FDA data suggests that vitamin A, found in 40 percent of sunscreens on the market, may be

RELATED

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## 6. *Cultivating Legislative Champions*



Find creative ways to engage key legislators in your campaign and make sure your message is heard.



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## *7. Lesson From Your Mother: Don't forget to say thank you!*



Build ongoing,  
positive  
relationships  
with your  
legislative  
champions.

## *8. Don't disappear when things aren't moving or when you're not in session.*



These are great times to meet with lawmakers or provide members resource events on issues, trainings on advocacy skills, and do outreach events.

*Meet with lawmakers for briefings and updates.*

# Toxic Free Kids Party at Kidzu Museum



Fun, crafts, resources, education



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## Birthday Party & Service Project for Martin Luther King, Jr.

Moms' Nights Out



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# Four Key Principles:



1. Stay nimble and responsive
2. Constantly test
3. Maintain the dialogue
4. Open as many engagement avenues as possible

# Lessons Learned:

- It's a dialogue, not a broadcast
- Be a part of the community
- Enter the conversation
- Pay attention to themes or stories that resonate with certain communities and not others
- Keep messages positive and direct
- To double your impact, always learn the best times and types of posts to increase traffic on your Facebook and Twitter accounts





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**TOGETHER**

**WE CAN BUILD a NATION  
WHERE CHILDREN, PARENTS and BUSINESSES THRIVE,  
and END DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MOTHERS...**

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# Thank You

