

***Consumers Union * Consumer Federation of America *
* Kids in Danger * Union of Concerned Scientists *
* U.S. Public Interest Research Group * Public Citizen *
* National Research Center for Women & Families ***

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Consumer Groups Applaud Senate Passage of Strong Product Safety Bill; *Urge President to Sign Bill into Law Now*

Washington, D.C.—Today, consumer, public interest and scientific groups applaud the U.S. Senate for passing strong product safety reform legislation that would overhaul the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The bipartisan Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 will make consumer products safer by requiring that toys and infant products be tested before they are sold, and by banning lead and phthalates in toys. The bill also will create the first comprehensive publicly accessible consumer complaint database, give the CPSC the resources it needs to protect the public, increase civil penalties that CPSC can assess against violators of CPSC laws, and protect whistleblowers who report product safety defects.

The groups praised the Senate Conferees for their tireless work in reconciling the House and Senate versions of the CPSC reform bill: Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), Chairman Mark Pryor (D-AR), Senator John Sununu (R-NH), Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX). The groups also thank Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL), Senator Claire McCaskill (D-MO), and Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) for their critical work on this bill.

In approving this sweeping reform measure by a vote of 89 to 3, the Senate put children's and consumers' safety first by enacting the most significant improvements of the Consumer Product Safety Commission since the agency was established in the 1970's. The bill was approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on July 30th by an overwhelming vote of 424-1. The President must sign this bill into law this week, before the August recess, the groups urged.

“My family and I are so honored that the portion of the bill that will protect children from unsafe infant and toddler products such as cribs is named for our son Danny,” stated Linda Ginzel, president of Kids In Danger. Ginzel and her husband Boaz Keysar founded the organization to protect children from unsafe children's products after Danny's death in 1998 in a recalled defective portable crib. The Danny Keysar Product Safety Notification Act, which is contained within the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008, would require mandatory standards and testing for specific infant and toddler products, ban the sale, lease or use in

commercial settings of cribs that do not meet current safety standards, and would require manufacturers to include product registration cards with new products to facilitate notice of recalled products. “This, along with Kids In Danger, is Danny’s legacy,” added Ginzel.

“This bill represents the most significant improvements to product safety since Congress created the CPSC in the 1970’s. This reform is much needed, long overdue and necessary to ensure that CPSC can successfully ensure the safety of consumer products,” stated Rachel Weintraub, Director of Product Safety and Senior Counsel with Consumer Federation of America. “We applaud the Senate for their strong vote in support of consumer safety today.”

“This week, Congress responded to the wishes of parents and children all across America and passed legislation that will help restore our confidence in the safety of our toys and everyday products,” said Ami Gadhia, Policy Counsel for Consumers Union. “This landmark, bi-partisan legislation will overhaul an agency that – as reported by *Consumer Reports* magazine - was unable to do its job for far too long. The President should now sign on the dotted line and turn this bill into law,” Gadhia added.

"This bill introduces critical reforms like ensuring that toys are tested for safety before they go on the market, banning certain hazardous substances, and creating an online database for consumers to share information about dangerous products with each other," said David Arkush, Director of Public Citizen's Congress Watch division. "Consumers don't always come out on top in Congress, especially when big business fights hard, but this time consumers won big. Congress deserves applause."

“We applaud the Senate for acting to get toxic chemicals like lead and phthalates out of our children’s toys,” said U.S. PIRG Public Health Advocate Elizabeth Hitchcock. “This bill is a huge victory for America's littlest consumers in the face of ExxonMobil and the chemical industry’s efforts to gut it. The conferees and their staff deserve tremendous credit for bringing it over the finish line.”

“Congress passed today the strongest consumer product safety bill in 30 years,” said Dr. Diana Zuckerman, President of the National Research Center for Women & Families. “Our children and grandchildren are the big winners because their toys will be safer.”

"This bill will enhance the scientific integrity of the CPSC, protect whistleblowers and improve consumer safety by making the agency more transparent and accountable," said Dr. Francesca T. Grifo, director of the Scientific Integrity Program, Union of Concerned Scientists.

The House and Senate conferees on the product safety measure concluded action this weekend. The conference report on the legislation must now be approved by the President for his signature. Here are some examples of how this legislation changes and improves the safety of products sold in the United States:

- Lead will be essentially eliminated from toys and children’s products.
- Consumers will have access to a publicly-accessible database to report and learn about hazards posed by unsafe products.

- Toys and other children's products will be required to be tested for safety before they are sold.
- State Attorneys General will have the necessary authority to enforce product safety laws.
- CPSC has the authority to levy more significant civil penalties against violators of its safety regulations, which will help deter wrongdoing.
- Toxic phthalates will be banned from children's products.
- Whistleblowers will be granted important protections.
- CPSC will receive substantial increases in its resources – including its staffing levels, its laboratory and computer resources and its various authorities to conduct recalls and take other actions - going forward.

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Consumer Federation of America (consumerfed.org); Consumers Union (consumersunion.org); Kids In Danger (kidsindanger.org); National Research Center For Women & Families (center4research.org); Public Citizen (citizen.org); U.S. PIRG (uspirg.org)