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**Consumer, Health, and Safety Groups Urge Congress to Reject Bill
that Weakens the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA)**

**House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee plans to mark up bill
that would undermine safeguards that protect children from unsafe toys, products**

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A coalition of consumer, health, and safety groups today called on Congress to reject a bill that would weaken the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA), a vital law that keeps unsafe toys and products off the shelves.

The CPSIA was approved in 2008 in response to the recall of millions of toys and children's products for excessive lead, ingestion hazards, and other serious health risks. The CPSIA was passed with overwhelming support from both parties in Congress and signed by President Bush. The law raised standards and improved safeguards against unsafe toys and products, and it provided for a public database for consumers to report and read complaints about hazardous products filed with the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

But now the House Commerce, Manufacturing and Trade Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee is planning to meet Thursday to mark up a bill that would undo key components of the CPSIA that aim to keep children safe.

Late yesterday, committee staff circulated its latest version of the bill. After reviewing the newest draft, the consumer and safety groups said it would lower standards and roll back safeguards for children and infants. The CPSIA was approved with overwhelming, bipartisan support, and the groups said any changes to the law should be considered in the same spirit.

Ami Gadhia, Policy Counsel for Consumers Union, said, "The stakes are too high to rush these sweeping changes. A toy box shouldn't be a game of roulette. You ought to be able to buy toys for your children and know that they've been properly tested for safety. This draft bill sets up impossible hurdles that would likely mean toys and other children's products wouldn't be adequately tested for safety."

O. Marion Burton, MD, FAAP, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics, said, "The American Academy of Pediatrics has profound concerns about the legislation currently being considered by the Subcommittee to scale back the child health protections contained in the CPSIA. For nearly forty years, our nation has been striving to remove lead from children's environments because we recognize its devastating impact on child health. Congress should not allow more lead in toys and other products specifically designed for children."

Christine Hines, Consumer and Civil Justice Counsel at Public Citizen's Congress Watch, said "The Enhancing CPSC Authority and Discretion Act of 2011 is an ignoble effort to undo the substantial consumer protections contained in the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008. This bill seeks to impose severe restrictions on the successful incident reporting database, such as limiting individuals who can report to the database and adding onerous burdens to the reporting process. Evidently, supporters of this bill would prefer that consumers remain in the dark and unaware of dangerous products. Considering the time and resources used in building the database, this proposal would turn a vigorous consumer tool into a dramatic waste of government resources."

Diana Zuckerman, PhD, President of the Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund, said, "This bill is bad news for our children. It would weaken current law, which prevents our children from being exposed to hormones in plastic toys and children's products. The petroleum-based hormones in phthalates have been linked to testicular cancer and other dangerous diseases. That's why the bill originally passed almost unanimously in Congress and was signed by President Bush."

Liz Hitchcock, U.S. Public Interest Research Group public health advocate, said, "As the scientific evidence continues to build that children need stronger protection from toxic chemicals, these efforts to weaken the toy safety law's bans on toxic lead and phthalates in children's products are outrageous and should be rejected."

Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger, said, "The year 2007 marked the beginning of an avalanche of recalls of millions of cribs for sometimes fatal flaws. In response, CPSIA created the opportunity for what is now the strongest crib standard in the world – letting parents everywhere rest a little easier knowing their child slept safely. While we appreciate that the draft amendment will still require third party testing of cribs and other durable infant and toddler products, we are disheartened that children in child care centers will not be afforded the same protections. By allowing existing cribs, no matter what safety standards they meet, to remain in child care facilities, the drafters of this amendment do a disservice to the millions of American families who rely on safe child care."

Rachel Weintraub, Director of Product Safety for Consumer Federation of America, said, "We are profoundly disappointed that the proposed amendment to the CPSIA goes well beyond providing additional discretion for CPSC and weakens, eliminates or alters significant provisions of the CPSIA, rendering them vastly less protective of the public health. This proposed language moves the pendulum backward and removes existing protections, making our children vulnerable once again."

American Academy of Pediatrics * Cancer Prevention and Treatment Fund *
Consumer Federation of America * Consumers Union * Kids In Danger *
Public Citizen's Congress Watch * U.S. Public Interest Research Group

Media contacts:

David Butler, Consumers Union, 202-462-6262

Rachel Weintraub, Consumer Federation of America, 202 939 1012

Liz Hitchcock, U.S. PIRG, 202-461-3826

Nancy Cowles, Kids In Danger, 312.218.5593