

*** CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA * CONSUMERS UNION *
* KIDS IN DANGER * NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER FOR WOMEN &
FAMILIES * UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS * U.S. PUBLIC
INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP ***

February 18, 2011

Dear Representative:

We strongly urge you to **oppose Amendment 545 to H.R. 1** submitted by Rep. Mike Pompeo (R-KS). This amendment is better described as the “Keep American Families in the Dark” amendment, because it will deny funds to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to move forward on an important public consumer safety information database.

The database will provide a mechanism for consumers both to report harms (or risks of harms) associated with consumer products, and to research risks associated with particular products. The database will also help the CPSC to work more efficiently, by giving the agency the ability to identify trends in product hazards much more quickly and efficiently.

The CPSC database contains an array of protections to ensure that inaccurate information does not get published. Anonymous complaints will not be permitted, and only *safety-related* information will be permitted. Complaints will not be considered for publication if 8 specific minimum fields are not filled out. Businesses also get to see every report of harm before it is placed in the database, and have the opportunity to correct inaccurate information and to provide their own comments. These protections are in place to provide transparency for consumers, while also providing protections for manufacturers.

The CPSC has already invested time and resources in creating and implementing the database. Most of the work has already been done and the project is ready to be launched. Cutting funding now simply wastes the dollars already spent.

Amendment 545 is bad for safety because:

- Without the CPSC database, consumers will be left in the dark about products that harmed other consumers. For years, consumers have been left in the dark because CPSC’s hands have been tied by section 6(b) of the Consumer Product Safety Act -- unsafe toys and other consumer products were injuring, sometimes killing, adults, children and infants, but the news about these harmful products was held back for weeks, months, even years. Due to this lack of transparency, more injuries and fatalities happened because unsuspecting consumers were not alerted to the risks.
- Without the CPSC database, the agency will be forced to continue its outdated and inefficient method of searching a variety of “silos” for emerging product hazard trends. This will result in a waste of CPSC resources.

We urge you to oppose Pompeo Amendment #545 and stand up for American families.

Sincerely,

Consumer Federation of America

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Kids In Danger

National Research Center for Women and Families

Union of Concerned Scientists

U.S. Public Interest Research Group