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CONTACT:

Rachel Weintraub, CFA, 202 387 6121
Brian Gumm, OMB Watch, 202 683 4812

***WHEN IT COMES TO PROTECTING OUR NATION'S CHILDREN,
REGULATIONS ARE EFFECTIVE***

*Thanks to Aggressive Government Oversight, the Gifts You Buy This Holiday Season Are Safer
Than Ever Before*

Washington D.C., -- It's the holiday season, and for many families, that means children will soon be unwrapping presents and playing with new toys. Parents also will be receiving a variety of children's products such as cribs, child seats and much more. Before the passage of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) in 2008, the safety of these gifts was much more uncertain than it is today.

In 2007, 46 million toys and 15 million other children's products were recalled because they were found to pose serious health and safety hazards. In some cases, toys were coated with lead paint, children's jewelry contained toxic metals and cribs were unsafe. To make matters worse, the federal agency charged with protecting American consumers did not have the authority or the resources to fulfill its mission. The CPSIA changed all that, and today, it helps to ensure that the holiday season is a time of excitement and joy for American families, undisturbed by dangerous—in some cases even life-threatening—products.

About Toy and Product Safety

The implementation of the CPSIA and all U.S. toy and product safety is the responsibility of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The CPSIA empowers the CPSC to respond swiftly to emerging toy and product hazards, implement strong safety standards for these products, and immediately inform the American public through an online product database about safety hazards.

The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008

In just four years, the CPSIA and the increased oversight authority it provides to the CPSC have prevented numerous potential injuries and deaths from unsafe products nationwide. Especially important are the mandatory standards the CPSIA requires. For example:

- Lead has been significantly reduced in toys, children's jewelry and other products, protecting millions of kids from ingesting this potentially lethal heavy metal.
- A category of toxic chemicals known as phthalates has been banned from children's products.
- Toys must now be tested for safety before they go on the market.
- U.S. crib safety standards now are the strongest in the world.

- Today, the CPSC is more proactive about inspecting the safety of foreign-made toys and other products when they arrive at U.S. ports. This year alone, CPSC inspectors have prevented more than 2 million dangerous toys from reaching store shelves.
- American consumers have access to more and better information about potential toy and other product hazards through the new CPSC database, SaferProducts.gov. Since its launch in 2011, more than 10,000 hazard reports have been posted. The database also has helped to speed the CPSC's identification of dangerous products and their removal from the marketplace.

“The holidays should be a time of celebration and giving. Thanks to commonsense safety standards, the gifts we exchange with the children in our lives are safer than they were just a few years ago, making for a healthier and happier holiday season for everyone,” stated Rachel Weintraub, legislative director and senior counsel with Consumer Federation of America.

The Future of Toy and Product Safety

While the CPSC has been successful in implementing the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, its work is not yet complete. Specifically, the CPSC will be developing mandatory safety standards for infant and toddler products, similar to mandatory safety standards already on the books for cribs, infant walkers and toddler beds.

But anti-regulatory legislation would hamper the CPSC's ability to ensure the safety of the gifts we give and receive at the holidays. This is especially true of bills that specifically target independent federal agencies like the CPSC with redundant review and analysis requirements. These bills were all too common in the 112th Congress, especially in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they will likely come up again when Congress returns to work in January 2013.

The Consumer Federation of America is an association of nearly 300 nonprofit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.

OMB Watch is a nonprofit research and advocacy organization dedicated to promoting government accountability and effectiveness and increasing citizen engagement.

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