

Consumer Federation of America - Consumers Union -  
Danny Foundation - Kids in Danger - National SAFE KIDS  
Campaign - U.S. Public Interest Research Group

April 7, 2005

The Honorable  
Subcommittee Transportation, Treasury, HUD, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and  
Independent Agencies  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

As organizations working to prevent needless deaths and injuries caused by unsafe products, we strongly urge you and your colleagues on the Transportation, Treasury, HUD, the Judiciary, District of Columbia, and Independent Agencies Subcommittee on Appropriations to increase the budget and staffing of the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). **Our organizations support a CPSC budget of \$64.549 million, an increase of \$2.05 million from the President's 2006 budget. We urge your Subcommittee to assist the CPSC in its critical mission to protect the American public from risks associated with consumer products by supporting this \$2.05 million increase.**

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is an independent health and safety regulatory agency that is responsible for protecting the American public from unreasonable risks of injury and death from about 15,000 types of consumer products. CPSC develops voluntary and mandatory safety standards for products, conducts recalls of hazardous products, and alerts the public to safe practices and safety hazards associated with consumer products.

The work of CPSC has contributed to the prevention of tens of thousands of tragedies from unsafe products and has saved society billions of dollars. CPSC is a great value to the American public and saves the country many times the agency's annual budget in terms of injuries prevented and lives saved.

The President's 2006 Budget Proposal and CPSC's 2006 performance budget request is \$62,499,000. This Budget, though \$350,000 more than last year, will *not* enable the Commission to fund cost increases associated with current activities. CPSC's proposed budget, in inflation adjusted dollars, is 60% less than what it was in 1974, when the Commission was created by Congress. In 2005, CPSC's full time employee (FTE) level was funded at 471 (while the actual FTE level was 460). The 2006 proposed budget funds CPSC at 446 FTEs. This is a significant reduction that might prevent the agency from fulfilling its mission to protect consumers from unsafe products. CPSC's proposed budget hurts CPSC at its core since 90% of the budget is allocated for staff salaries and office space, leaving only 10% of its budget for programs, public educational efforts and research needed to protect consumers from deaths and injuries.

Costs associated with staff salaries and benefits and office space have increased \$2.4 million since last year. In order to maintain CPSC's current level of programs and activities, the Commission's budget must be increased by that amount.

The President's 2006 budget does not provide enough funds to enable CPSC to keep up with inflation. That means that this effective and important agency will have to scale back its life-saving work in 2006. This will lead to more unnecessary deaths and injuries to American children and families.

We request that your Subcommittee help the CPSC to actualize its mission to protect the public from risks associated with consumer products and provide the agency additional funds. We would be happy to discuss these recommendations with you and greatly appreciate your interest in and commitment to consumer product safety. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to call Rachel Weintraub with Consumer Federation of America at (202) 387-6121.

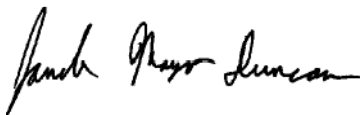
Sincerely,



Rachel Weintraub  
Assistant General Counsel  
Consumer Federation of America



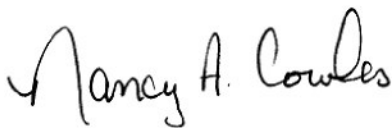
Sally Greenberg  
Senior Product Safety Counsel  
Consumers Union



Janell Duncan  
Legislative Counsel  
Consumers Union



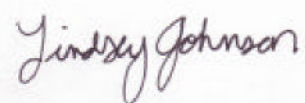
Jack Walsh  
Executive Director  
The Danny Foundation



Nancy Cowles  
Executive Director  
Kids in Danger



Alan Korn  
Director of Public Policy & General Counsel  
National SAFE KIDS Campaign



Lindsey Johnson  
Consumer Advocate  
U. S. Public Interest Research Group