

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

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**Consumer Groups Call on Congress to Finalize Product
Safety Legislation Now;
*Delays on Toy Safety Should End***

Joint Statement from Consumer, Public Interest and Scientific Groups

Washington, DC—Today consumer, public interest and scientific groups are calling on Congress to finish the job of reforming the nation's product safety system before the August recess.

Bi-partisan legislation passed the U.S. House of Representatives in December and the U.S. Senate in March. Conferee staff and members have been meeting to resolve differences since then to reach agreement on a wide range of issues. Today in a public conference committee meeting, the House and Senate reached agreement on a number of issues important to our organizations, including the ban on lead in children's toys and products, the Attorney General enforcement provision, and the establishment of a public database on product hazards.

The product safety legislation will revamp the under-funded and under-staffed Consumer Product Safety Commission and includes some of the most significant improvements in nearly two decades of an agency that oversees the safety of more than 15,000 consumer products in the United States.

The groups released the following statement:

“After a record number of product recalls in 2007 and more in 2008, consumers have real concerns about the safety of the toys they buy. Conferees have made real progress on key points of contention between the House and Senate product safety bills, especially with regard to clarifying the role of state Attorney General enforcement, creating a public database on product hazards and banning lead. But the clock is ticking. Congress needs to step up efforts to resolve the final differences and move the product safety legislation over the finish line. Our product safety system has been broken for too long and needs to be fixed - now. Consumers have waited long enough. It is time for every member of Congress to put safety first and help ensure passage of a strong product safety bill.”

The consumer groups call on Congress to resolve some of the outstanding issues that remain unresolved by:

- **Adopting a mandatory Toy Safety Standard.** Current voluntary standards for toy safety must be made mandatory (subject to upgrading by the CPSC) and toys should be certified to meet that standard before entering the marketplace. The Senate bill includes this language, but the House bill does not.
- **Banning certain Phthalates.** The Senate bill includes a provision eliminating phthalates in children's products and child care articles, which will serve to significantly curb children's routes of exposure to these potential reproductive system toxins. The House bill does not include this provision.
- **Strengthening All Terrain Vehicle Standard.** We support strengthening the Senate provision that makes the voluntary standards for ATVs mandatory and requires those entities selling ATVs in the U.S. to be subject to ATV action plans. We support the inclusion of increased safety measures to make ATVs safer for all consumers. The House bill does not include an ATV provision.
- **Rejecting attempts to rewrite Third Party Testing Preemption.** Industry is seeking now, at the eleventh hour, to add a new provision (not in either the House or Senate-passed bills) to prevent states from addressing new toy and product testing problems that could arise. We strongly oppose this effort.
- **Protecting employees who sound the alarm about unsafe consumer products.** The Senate bill offers whistleblower protections; the House bill does not. Congress has a strong record of enacting laws that protect whistleblowers working for publicly traded corporations, in the nuclear power and nuclear weapons industries, and ground transportation workers. Those who protect us from unsafe consumer products should not fear retaliation from their employers.