

*** CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA * CONSUMERS UNION ***
*** KIDS IN DANGER * PUBLIC CITIZEN ***
*** UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS * U.S. PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH**
GROUP *

February 17, 2011

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: PROTECT CHILDREN - OPPOSE AMENDMENTS # 545, 546, 547

Dear Representative:

Our organizations write to you to urge you to **vote no on amendments 545, 546, and 547** to H.R. 1, the continuing resolution, offered by Representative Pompeo. These amendments will result in the waste of government resources and will take away important public health protections.

The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA), signed into law in 2008, strengthened the authority of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the federal agency that oversees the safety of approximately 15,000 consumer products.

The law directed the CPSC to design a database where consumers can report and research safety hazards experienced with a wide variety of consumer products. 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 identify trends in product hazards much more quickly and efficiently.

Amendment 545 is bad for safety because it would stop this public safety information database from going into effect (it is scheduled to go live in March 2011). Without the CPSC database, consumers will remain in the dark about products that harmed other consumers. And without the CPSC database, the agency will be forced to continue its outdated and inefficient method of searching a variety of “silos” for emerging product hazard trends.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.

Amendments 546 and 547 are bad for safety because they would attack one of the core tenets of the law: a requirement that products like toys be tested for safety *before* being sold. If the safety testing requirements for children’s products are eliminated, the law will no longer be meaningful. We will return to the way things were before the CPSIA – simply trusting, and hoping, that manufacturers are testing toys and pacifiers, and other children’s products – and hoping that our children are not the test subjects for safety. This testing is proactive, and is better for both consumers and manufacturers: it will build safety into the supply chain early on, instead of expensive recalls *after* children have been injured or killed.

We urge you to protect children – the most vulnerable consumers – and to oppose these amendments.