



Consumer Federation of America



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CFA Applauds Speier/Durbin Bill to Protect Children from Detergent Packet Poisoning

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Popular, convenient, and dangerous liquid detergent packs can deliver hazardous chemicals to children in colorful, bite-sized packages that look like candy. In fact, in just two years, the National Poison Data System (NPDS) reported that 769 children required hospitalization for injuries that included seizures, vomiting blood, fluid in the lungs, dangerously slow heartbeats, respiratory arrest, gastric burn, and comas, as a result of eating these packets. Over all, the NPDS has received 17,230 calls involving children exposed to chemicals by the packets.

Representative Speier's and Senator Durbin's PACS Act would expand CPSC rules requiring child-resistant packaging to cover liquid detergent packets. It would address the design and color of the packets, so that they aren't as attractive to children; the composition of the packets, so that the consequences of exposure are less severe; and the adequacy of the warning labels, to properly inform consumers about the risk. This is a common requirement among many other household products such as medicines and cleaning agents which require child-resistant packaging.

“Because of the alarming number of incidents associated with laundry packets—more than 1,700 CPSC reports, over 17,000 poison center calls, and possibly two deaths—it is time for a strong and effective solution,” said Rachel Weintraub, CFA's legislative director and general counsel. “By addressing the design, accessibility and content of these popular laundry packets, this legislation will protect America's children from injury, illness, and death.”

“This bill balances the safety of our children with the convenience of laundry packets,” stated Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger. “The real dangers posed by these tiny packets are certainly not evident to children, drawn to them by the texture and colors, but more importantly it is not obvious to

their caregivers. The bill's requirements for packaging, labeling and contents are vital to keeping children safe.”

The Consumer Federation of America is a nonprofit association of more than 250 consumer groups that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.