

*** CONSUMER FEDERATION OF AMERICA * CONSUMERS UNION *
* KIDS IN DANGER * NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTER FOR WOMEN &
FAMILIES * PUBLIC CITIZEN * UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS *
U.S. PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP ***

March 1, 2011

Dear Senator:

As the Senate considers **H.R. 1, Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011** we strongly urge you to **oppose Section 4046**. This section seeks to defund and prevent implementation of an important consumer protection. This proposal is better described as the “Keep American Families in the Dark” provision, because it will deny funds to the CPSC to move forward on an important public consumer safety information database. We urge you to reject all efforts to dismantle the database as the Senate takes up appropriations for the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

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 work more efficiently, by giving the agency the ability to identify trends in product hazards much more quickly and efficiently.

The CPSC database contains an array of protections to ensure that inaccurate information does not get published. Anonymous complaints will not be permitted, and only *safety-related* information will be permitted. Complaints will not be considered for publication unless 8 specific minimum fields are filled out. Businesses also get to see every report of harm before it is placed in the database, and have the opportunity to correct inaccurate information and to provide their own comments at any time. These protections are in place to provide transparency for consumers, while also providing protections for manufacturers.

The CPSC has already invested time and resources in creating and implementing the database. Most of the work has already been done and the project is ready to be launched. Cutting funding now simply wastes the dollars already spent, prevents CPSC from working on the final details of implementation, and prevents the launch of the database.

This provision is bad for safety because:

- Without the CPSC database, consumers will be left in the dark about products that harmed other consumers. For years, consumers have been left in the dark because CPSC’s hands have been tied by section 6(b) of the Consumer Product Safety Act -- unsafe toys and other consumer products were injuring, sometimes killing, adults, children and infants, but the news about these harmful products was held back for weeks, months, even years. Due to this lack of transparency, more injuries and fatalities happened because unsuspecting consumers were not alerted to the risks.
- 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.

We urge you to oppose this provision and to stand up for American families.

Sincerely,

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