



IMPROVING
CHILDREN'S
PRODUCT
SAFETY



May 3, 2013

Honorable Sheldon Silver
Speaker
New York State Assembly
932 Legislative Office Building
Albany, NY 12248

Re: Support for A.812 (Rosenthal) and S. 3678 (Gallivan)

Dear Speaker Silver,

We are writing on behalf of Consumer Federation of America,¹ Kids In Danger,² and Parents for Window Blind Safety.³ Our organizations work to protect children from hazards posed by unsafe consumer products, including from the strangulation hazards posed by window coverings.

We are writing in support of A.812 (Rosenthal) and S. 3678 (Gallivan). This bill is critical for children in New York State because it will address the problems of hazardous window coverings that exist in child day centers, public institutions for children and certain other facilities. A.812 and S. 3678 requires that when new or replacement window coverings are installed by these public institutions, they install cordless window coverings or window coverings with inaccessible operational and inner cords. The bill allows for retrofitting devices to eliminate the accessible cord. Also, this bill requires that minimum standards be established for existing window coverings that minimize the risk of strangulation posed by window coverings.

¹ Consumer Federation of America is a non-profit association of approximately 280 pro-consumer groups that was founded in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through advocacy and education. www.consumerfed.org

² Kids In Danger (KID) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children's product safety. KID was founded in 1998 by the parents of sixteen-month-old Danny Keysar who died in his Chicago childcare home when a portable crib collapsed around his neck. www.kidsindanger.org

³ Parents for Window Blind Safety is a nonprofit organization founded by Matt and Linda Kaiser. PFWBS was created to support parents whose children have been seriously injured or killed by dangerous cords, to educate consumers about the dangers of accessible window covering cords in homes, daycare facilities, and military housing, to help create safer standards in the industry, to encourage innovation of safer products in the industry, and to test window coverings products for safety. www.parentsforwindowblindsafety.org

We strongly support this bill because cords in window coverings pose serious strangulation risks to children every day. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's most recent data indicates that since 1999 there have been a total of 276 strangulation and near-strangulation incidents involving corded window coverings. Of these 276 incidents, 140 were fatalities and 136 were nonfatal incidents, most of which resulted in injuries related to corded window blinds. Every year, approximately 21 children, between the ages of 8 months and 9 years old, strangle on window cords. In addition, according to a study from the CPSC in 1999 of licensed day care centers, 26% of those surveyed had potentially hazardous window coverings.⁴ The CPSC recommends only cordless window coverings where children live and visit. A.812 and S. 3678 will go a long way in protecting children from this hazard by removing window coverings with unsafe operational cords from daycare centers and other public institutions.

The current national voluntary safety standard written by the Window Covering Manufacturing Association does not adequately address the strangulation hazard posed by operational cords in window coverings. There are currently products on the market that are cordless. But many other products on the market, touted as safer, have separate operating cords, which have strangled children. The most effective way to protect children from hazards posed by cords on window coverings is to remove window coverings with long cords from a child's environment. A.812 and S. 3678 will effectively remove this hazard from public day care centers and other public institutions.

We strongly support A.812 and S. 3678 and urge your support to protect children in New York State from the hazards posed by cords on window coverings in child care centers and other public institutions for children.

We urge you to bring the bill to the floor for a vote. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Rachel Weintraub
Legislative Director and Senior Counsel
Consumer Federation of America

Nancy Cowles
Executive Director
Kids In Danger

Linda Kaiser
President
Parents for Window Blind Safety

⁴ <http://www.cpsc.gov/library/ccstudy.html>