

**Consumers Union * Consumer Federation of America * Kids In Danger *
* Public Citizen * Union of Concerned Scientists *
* U.S. Public Interest Research Group ***

**For Immediate Release
Wednesday, May 25, 2011**

**As House Committee Takes Up Bill to Weaken
Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA),
Consumer, Health, and Safety Groups Press Members to Put Kids First**

**House Energy and Commerce Committee will markup a bill
that would undermine safeguards protecting children from unsafe toys, products**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As the House Energy and Commerce Committee prepared to consider H.R. 1939, the *Enhancing CPSC Authority and Discretion Act of 2011*, a coalition of consumer, health, and safety groups said lawmakers should put kids first and reject the bill because it would weaken the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA), a vital law that keeps unsafe toys and products off the shelves.

The coalition against the House bill includes Consumers Union, Consumer Federation of America, Kids In Danger, Public Citizen, Union of Concerned Scientists, and the U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

The CPSIA became law in 2008 in response to the recall of millions of toys and children's products for excessive lead, ingestion hazards, and other serious health risks. The CPSIA was passed with overwhelming support from both parties in Congress and signed by President George W. Bush. The law raised standards and improved safeguards against unsafe toys and products. It also provided for a public database for consumers to report and read complaints about hazardous products filed with the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

The House bill would undo key components of the CPSIA that aim to keep children safe.

Ami Gadhia, Policy Counsel for Consumers Union, said, "The bill lets big toy manufacturers off the hook when it comes to safety testing. This legislation would mean that, once again, the toy box is a scary place. Toys with dangerous components, like tiny magnets that can rip through children's intestines if swallowed, could be back on the market because this bill sets up roadblocks to ensuring testing for this and other threats."

Rachel Weintraub, Director of Product Safety for Consumer Federation of America, said, "H.R. 1939 creates huge loopholes in the consumer protections provided by Congress in 2008. Parents will again be unsure about the safety of the products they seek to purchase for their families. It will now be unclear whether a children's product was tested for

safety and whether it is required to meet the strongest standard. Uncertainty and concern will again reign in the marketplace and our children will again be potentially at risk.”

Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of Kids In Danger, said, “This amendment weakens Danny’s Law, named after Danny Keysar whose parents founded Kids In Danger, by allowing child care facilities to keep old, possibly unsafe, cribs as long as they don’t have a drop-side. Any review of injury data from cribs shows that drop-sides are just one of the hazards that the new standard addresses.”

Christine Hines, Consumer and Civil Justice Counsel, Public Citizen said, “This bill adds unnecessary obstacles to the functioning of the consumer incident database, including rules that will intimidate consumers and discourage them from reporting safety incidents. It is clear that some in Congress would rather help industry players keep information about potentially harmful products hidden for as long as possible than allow consumers to share valuable product safety tips with each other.”

Francesca Grifo, Ph.D., senior scientist and director, Scientific Integrity Program, Union of Concerned Scientists, said, "Creating new hurdles for those who wish to post consumer complaints to the publicly accessible consumer product safety database not only harms American families, it also makes it more difficult for scientists at CPSC to identify emerging hazards, and work proactively to prevent harmful products from reaching the marketplace."

Liz Hitchcock of U.S. Public Interest Research Group said, “Three years ago, Congress took an historic step forward to protect kids from toxic lead and phthalates. It is unthinkable to now take the great leap backward that this bill represents. This bill will expose more children to more toxic chemicals and should be rejected.”

Media contacts:

David Butler, Consumers Union, dbutler@consumer.org, 202-462-6262

Rachel Weintraub, Consumer Federation of America, 202-939-1012

Liz Hitchcock, U.S. PIRG, 202-461-3826

Nancy Cowles, Kids In Danger, 312.218.5593