

Full Committee markup on public health and consumer product safety legislation

Statement of Congressman John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE MARKUP ON PUBLIC HEALTH AND CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY
LEGISLATION
September 27, 2007

The first five bills before us work to improve the public's health on a diverse range of issues.

- H.R. 20 increases awareness and provides more resources for postpartum depression. I commend Rep. Rush for his unwavering commitment and thank all those who worked to reach agreement on this important legislation to help women.

- H.R. 2295, the "ALS Registry Act," has extraordinary bipartisan support, including 44 Members of this Committee. This legislation creates a nationwide registry to collect data and information on the illness commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease, and other related motor neuron disorders.

- H.R. 507, "the Vision Care for Kids Act of 2007," provides services and increases public awareness with respect to vision abnormalities and children.

- The House already passed a version of H.R. 1727, the Christopher and Dana Reeve Paralysis Act, during the 109th Congress. I note the dedication and fine work of Reps. Baldwin and Bono who together will offer an amendment making technical corrections and other improvements to this important bill. I urge passage of both the amendment and the underlying legislation.

- The final public health bill is H.R. 970, the "Dextromethorphan Distribution Act of 2007." It has the support of key stakeholder groups including the Consumer Health Products Association and The Partnership for a Drug Free America. It will help curb the misuse of "Dex" by restricting who has access to this potent drug.

Next the Committee will consider four bills reported by the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection. All four bills help protect children from hazardous consumer products that can maim or kill. These bills serve as a prelude to more comprehensive legislation to improve product safety and strengthen the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

One bill, H.R. 814, will help prevent burns from gasoline cans.

Another bill, H.R. 1721, the Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act, will reduce instances of drowning caused by dangerous swimming pool drains.

Still another bill, H.R. 1699, will improve the effectiveness of recalls for cribs and other nursery furniture "this bill is especially timely, given the recent CPSC recall of one million cribs, linked to the deaths of at least three babies.

And finally, H.R. 2474 will put more teeth in CPSC enforcement by increasing the cap on civil penalties over 5 times its current level, up to \$10 million.

All four bills enjoyed bipartisan support and received unanimous approval in subcommittee.

I commend my colleagues on both sides of the dais for working in a bipartisan manner to bring these important public health and consumer protection bills to the full Committee.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce
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