

Chairman Dingell, House floor consideration of H. Res. 94, Supporting the Goals and Ideals of National Consumer Protection Week

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

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE H. RES. 94, SUPPORTING THE GOALS AND IDEALS OF NATIONAL CONSUMER PROTECTION WEEK

February 5, 2007

Mr. Speaker, the Committee on Energy and Commerce is pleased to bring to the floor H.Res. 94, supporting the goals and ideals of National Consumer Protection Week. We commend Reps. Hinjosa and Biggert for authoring the resolution.

Under Rule X, the Committee on Energy and Commerce is the authorizing Committee for the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The FTC, which administers over 40 Federal statutes under our purview, is the lead Federal consumer protection agency. The FTC also administers a handful of financial consumer protection laws such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Truth in Lending Act, and the Equal Credit Opportunity Act. This has been and remains an effective model.

The Committee that I am honored to lead has a long and proud tradition of consumer protection. It has mandated and overseen major initiatives to rid the markets of unsafe, and in some cases deadly, children's toys and other products.

It has taken legislative action to establish the national Do Not Call List, a giant step forward in lessening annoying telemarketing calls to consumer homes. It also has responsibility for the CAN-SPAM law aimed at curbing the volume of junk e-mail polluting and slowing down Internet commerce.

It is the lead Committee on privacy. Two of our Members, Ranking Member Joe Barton and Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet Chairman Ed Markey, are co-founders of the Privacy Caucus. Together, we wrote the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act that protects the most intimate details of American lives. We have begun bipartisan discussions with the Committee on Ways and Means for the design and operation of privacy and security protections for groundbreaking health information technology legislation that we hope to have enacted in this Congress. We authored the privacy provisions of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act that protect financial information.

Later this week, we will be reintroducing four major privacy bills -- legislation regarding spyware, pretexting, data security, and Social Security number protection -- that were reported unanimously by the Committee on Energy and Commerce in the 109th Congress (and in the case of spyware, passed the House). We intend to resolve jurisdictional issues with other Committees where they exist. We will also continue to work with consumer groups, technology experts, and industry groups to enact protections that are the most effective possible for both consumers and businesses.

We work hard to live the goals of National Consumer Protection Week. All too often the marketplace takes on the Darwinian tone of "survival of the fittest" with John Q Public trampled in the process. It is fitting that we reflect on our responsibility to ensure transparency and fair treatment in the marketplace for the people who elect us. We salute the

FTC, the Better Business Bureau, and consumer groups for their hard work all year round on behalf of the American consumer. The Committee on Energy and Commerce intends to continue to live up to its reputation for fair and balanced laws and vigorous oversight on consumer protection issues. In the words of the Beatitudes: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for what is right for they shall be satisfied."

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce
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