



ENERGY & COMMERCE NEWSROOM

CHAIRMAN FRANK PALLONE, JR. | 116TH CONGRESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 10, 2019

CONTACT

[Evan Gilbert](#)– (202) 225-5735

Pallone Remarks at Subcommittee Markup of Six Bills to Keep American Families Safe from Dangerous Products

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at a Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee Markup of six bills to keep American families safe from dangerous products:*

Today, we are here to consider six bills that will keep kids and consumers safe from dangerous products. It's part of this Committee's commitment to put consumers first.

And congressional action is needed given the failure of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to act in recent years. At recent hearings, we heard from parents, consumer advocates, and even some commissioners that CPSC is too slow to act, too timid, or too deferential to industry. Its inaction has resulted in unnecessary injuries and at times cost Americans their lives.

At our legislative hearing last month, we heard emotional testimony from Crystal Ellis, whose son Camden was killed when a dresser tipped over onto him. She put a human face on the thousands of injured kids and more than 200 killed by furniture tip-overs. Ms. Ellis told us about the lack of action by industry to develop a voluntary standard to reduce or eliminate furniture tip-overs. Chair Schakowsky's STURDY Act would require CPSC to adopt a strong mandatory standard within one year of enactment, and I commend her for her leadership on this legislation.

We are also considering two bills today to reduce infant deaths and promote safe sleep practices. Representative Cárdenas's Safe Sleep Act would ban dangerous inclined sleepers that are responsible for at least 50 deaths. Some of these sleepers have been recalled, but others are still in stores and online, where soon-to-be parents, excited grandparents, or well-meaning friends may purchase them.

Crib bumpers are another hazardous children's product that is still being sold despite pediatricians urging parents not to use them. For years, pediatricians and public health experts have recommended against using crib bumpers because they can cause suffocation,

strangulation, entrapment, entanglement, or falls. They also provide no benefit to the baby. Several cities and states have already banned crib bumpers, including Chicago, Ohio, and Maryland. But that is not enough. It is time for Congress to act to make sure that babies are safe from these products no matter where they live.

We are also considering three bills that have long had bipartisan support. Representatives Kuster and Carter introduced the Nicholas and Zachary Burton Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act. This bill would direct CPSC to establish a grant program for states and local governments to install carbon monoxide alarms in dwellings, childcare facilities, schools, and senior centers and to assist with education and enforcement efforts to keep Americans safe from this silent killer.

Representatives Thompson and Joyce introduced the Portable Fuel Container Safety Act, which is also cosponsored by numerous Committee Democrats and Republicans. This legislation would require CPSC to adopt a mandatory rule to prevent flame jetting in portable fuel containers and improve child resistance controls on kerosene and diesel fuel containers.

Finally, Representatives Matsui and Griffith introduced the Safer Occupancy Furniture Flammability Act, which would adopt California's furniture flammability standard for upholstered furniture as a national flammability standard. California's standard can be met without the use of toxic flame-retardant chemicals that endanger not only the families that have these chemicals in their household furniture but also firefighters who are exposed to them when battling fires. As we heard from Captain Chris Parsons at our hearing last month, these chemicals have caused severe health problems for firefighters. I commend Representatives Matsui and Griffith for their leadership on this issue.

All six of these bills will save American lives, and that's why I am pleased to support all of them.

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