

Opening Statement
Chair Jan Schakowsky
Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “Keeping Kids and Consumers Safe from Dangerous Products”
June 13, 2019

Good morning. I am humbled by chairing this subcommittee as we discuss legislative solutions that can save lives.

This is a big deal. Protecting consumers is what drew me to public life.

And today, we are considering 7 bills that aim to protect consumers and save lives. I am the lead author of two of these bills.

This Subcommittee’s Vice Chair, Tony Cardenas, introduced the Safe Sleep Act of 2019, which would ban inclined sleep products. I wrote Acting CPSC Chairwoman Buerkle in April, asking her to recall the Rock n’ Play, which she did, but there are other inclined sleepers that pose a risk. So I am grateful to you, my friend, for introducing this important piece of legislation. We must get these products off the market and save babies’ lives.

I would like to ask for unanimous consent to insert for the record this May 30th Washington Post article (So ordered).

Annie Kuster, who has waived onto this subcommittee today, and Buddy Carter, a Member of this Subcommittee introduced the Nicholas and Zachary Burt Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Act. This would establish a CPSC grant program for states to install carbon monoxide detectors in childcare facilities, senior centers, and homes for low-income families or seniors.

Mike Thompson and David Joyce, who do not serve on this committee, introduced the Portable Fuel Safety Container Safety Act, which would direct CPSC to establish a mandatory standard for flame mitigation devices in portable fuel containers.

Doris Matsui and Morgan Griffith introduced the Safer Occupancy Furniture Flammability Act, which would adopt the California standard for upholstered furniture flammability.

Which brings me to the two pieces of legislation I have introduced. The first is the STURDY Act, which would direct CPSC to enact a mandatory standard to prevent furniture tip-overs.

Every hour, of every day, common pieces of furniture like clothing storage units, dressers, and chests tip, tilt, and fall. According to the CPSC, tip-overs inflict around 3 injuries per hour, and cause hundreds of avoidable child fatalities. Product experts and parental groups agree: tip-over injuries are preventable, but current industry standards are not enough.

In 2018 alone, over 2 million units of children’s products faced recall, and nursery furniture was

the leading category. CPSC rulemaking cannot move fast enough. In the last 10 years, the CPSC finalized only *one* mandatory safety standard.

The second bill, introduced earlier this week with my friends from Chicago, Bobby Rush and Robin Kelly, is the Safe Cribs Act, which would ban crib bumpers. The American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) safe sleep recommendations call for infants to sleep on a firm, flat surface and does not recommend the use of crib bumpers due to risk of suffocation. CPSC, for its part, has been working on safety standards for crib bumpers since 2012, but it is not clear when, if ever, they will adopt a standard. Families need this legislation!

Finally, Ranking Member Rodgers introduced the FASTER Act to enable businesses to recall potentially hazardous products via notification to the CPSC. I look forward to hearing more about the bill.

I appreciate the witnesses testifying today on these important bills and hope that we can move forward on a bipartisan basis in the near future.

