



IMPROVING
CHILDREN'S
PRODUCT
SAFETY

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**Bill sponsors and organizations mark fifth anniversary
of landmark consumer protection bill**

KID releases report on the impact of SaferProducts.gov

Chicago, IL— Five years ago the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA), the most significant product safety reform since the creation of the Consumer Product Safety Commission in 1972 was signed into law.

Today, Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky, Congressman Bobby Rush and others joined KID to mark this landmark legislation at the Carole Robertson Center for Learning. On August 14, 2008, the CPSIA was signed into law after a deliberative process and overwhelming bipartisan support in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. The law includes strong product safety reforms that revitalized the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

In the five years since CPSIA was passed, there have been five significant safety breakthroughs:

- The SaferProducts.gov database;
- Third-party premarket testing for children’s products;
- The reduction of lead in children’s products;
- Strong mandatory standards for cribs and other infant and toddler products; and
- A mandatory safety standard for children’s toys.

An important part of the Act dealt with infant and toddler products and is referred to as “Danny’s Law.”

“I am particularly proud of the durable infant and toddler products rules that have saved countless lives since the CPSIA was enacted,” stated Congresswoman Schakowsky. “Those provisions stem

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from a bill I sponsored since 2001 named after Danny Keysar, whose parents founded Kids in Danger after his needless death.”

These provisions require tough new standards for infant and toddler durable products. Strong new standards for cribs, play yards, toddler beds and other products are already in place. When the new crib standard – the world’s strongest – “Danny’s Law” also required older unsafe cribs to be removed from use in child care facilities and other public accommodations.

“Above all else, child care providers strive for a safe and developmentally-appropriate environment for the children in their care,” said Maria Whelan, President and CEO, Illinois Action for Children. “The rollout of new crib standards was done with the highest concern for child safety as well as the cost it would impose on child care providers, which was greatly appreciated.”

“Illinois Action for Children and child care providers across the state benefit from the Children's Product Safety Act and the hard work of Kids in Danger, Rep. Schakowsky, and Attorney General Lisa Madigan,” Whelan said. “We look forward to continuing our partnership with them to create stronger standards for children's products and to ensure the ongoing safety of all children in all care settings.”

Five years ago, the CPSIA also made the voluntary toy standard mandatory – assuring an end to the millions of toys recalled for lead, magnet or choking hazards. With the new standard and required independent testing, parents can have more assurance the toys they buy are safe.

“Making the toy safety standard mandatory means parents don’t have to play detective looking for sharp edge, dangerous projections, or small unseen parts. Parents can now have more confidence that the toys their children play with actually meet these critical safety standards,” stated Brian Imus, State Director with Illinois PIRG. “The CPSC and manufacturers have taken action on well over one hundred toy hazards identified in over twenty-five years of PIRG ‘Trouble In Toyland’ reports, but for too long many of those actions were slow or voluntary. The CPSIA’s new tools ensure mandatory toy testing will protect children.”

Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, a strong advocate for product safety in Illinois said, “Five years ago, the hard work of this coalition of safety advocates paid off.

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With the passage of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act, critical safeguards that were envisioned for years have become reality. But even with these stronger safety standards in place, our work is not done. That's why we continue to focus on raising awareness of dangerous recalled products and ensuring that they are no longer in homes and child care facilities.”

Another safety breakthrough of the landmark legislation was the creation of a public database of consumer reports. This allows consumers to report incidents with products and review reports others have filed. SaferProducts.gov went live in March 2011 and today KID released, *Two Year Check-up: SaferProducts.gov* with an analysis of the first two years of data relating to children. Reviewing incident reports, KID found that almost a fifth of all reports were for children's products. The largest group of children's product reports were for nursery products (45%), followed by toys (22%).

Other findings include:

- Eighty-two percent of the child injuries reported were for children under six, while 95% of the deaths reported were under the age of three.
- Some manufacturers show up repeatedly in the list of incident reports. These include the Bumbo infant seat with 32 reports and 24 injuries, trampolines, cribs, infant sleepers and more.
- There were 125 incidents reported in saferproducts.gov involving a children's product where incidents or injuries occurred prior to the recall of the product. In these cases, the reports were instrumental in leading to the ultimate recall of an unsafe product. Many companies responded with a promise of an investigation and a few fast-tracked the recall process. This demonstrates that SaferProducts.gov encourages proactive product safety responses by manufacturers.

SaferProducts.gov allows for companies and manufacturers to respond to reports. For children's products, less than half (48%) of companies take advantage of this opportunity. While some companies provided useful feedback to consumers, companies often failed to communicate important facts about the product. Interestingly, in those responses, 34% of the companies failed to mention that the product had been previously recalled, even in circumstances that involved the death of child.

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The database continues to grow in usefulness as there are more reports to review for emerging hazards, ineffective recalls or other public health information. Based on the information and analysis, KID recommends the following:

- The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) should continue to integrate other information from their site into the database. Links to recall reports are especially important.
- Continued work to publicize SaferProducts.gov to consumers and businesses is needed to increase its effectiveness.
- CPSC should solicit input from those who have used the database – to report a problem, as a manufacturer, or for research – to look for ways to improve its usefulness.
- In addition, when CPSC follows up on reports and takes action, or finds that the manufacturer’s response is inaccurate, additional notes should be added to the report.

“SaferProducts.gov is one of the safety breakthroughs that came about due to the passage of the landmark Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act in 2008,” concluded Nancy Cowles, executive director of Kids In Danger. “The efforts of these advocates, the hard work of Congressman Rush and Schakowsky in working to get an overwhelmingly bipartisan bill has paid off in lives saved, dangerous products removed from sale and an assurance that children’s products today are as safe as they have ever been.”

The words Congresswoman Schakowsky said at the signing of CPSIA, “Every child in America will be safer now that this bill has become law,” have been proven true five years later.

The full report can be found here:

http://www.kidsindanger.org/docs/research/SaferProducts_Report.pdf

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