



## For immediate release

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## Senate Introduces Esther’s Law to Protect Children from Deadly Water Beads

(Washington, DC) – Today, U.S. Senators [introduced](#) Esther’s Law which will ban the sale of hazardous water beads which pose an ingestion and toxicity hazard. The bipartisan bill, which was introduced by Senators Baldwin (D-WI), Casey (D-PA), and Collins (R-ME), will direct the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to issue a rule that would ban water beads marketed to children as toys, educational materials, sensory tools, or art materials. A similar water bead ban bill was introduced in the [U.S. House](#) last year.

Water beads are tiny, plastic balls made of superabsorbent polymer chemicals that can grow up to 1,500 times their size when placed in liquid. If ingested, inhaled, or inserted in ear canals, water beads absorb bodily fluids and can lead to potentially life-threatening injuries, such as intestinal or bowel obstruction, or lung or ear damage. Additionally, the ingredients in some water beads have also been shown to be toxic, resulting in poisonings and potentially complicating recovery for some children.

The bill is named after 10-month-old [Esther](#) who passed away on July 7, 2023, in Wisconsin due to water bead obstruction. No one knew how Esther got hold of a water bead because her family did everything correctly - the water beads had not been used in months, adult supervision was strictly enforced, and they followed the directions and the product’s age recommendation.

According to [CPSC data](#), between 2016 and 2022, there were an estimated 7,800 water bead injuries that were treated in hospital emergency departments and at least one death. No amount of supervision can keep children safe from water beads. Even if purchased for older kids, the tiny beads can easily spread throughout the home and a younger child may get hold of them.

“Today marks a significant step forward in safeguarding children from dangerous consumer products,” said **Ashley Haugen, President and Founder of That Water Bead Lady**. “The introduction of Esther’s Law represents a beacon of hope for countless families who have experienced the devastating effects of water bead injury. This law embodies the courage of survivors like Kipley Haugen and Kennedy Mitchell and honors the memory of Esther Bethard.

We are grateful to the lawmakers who have listened to our concerns and are taking action to make children's safety a top priority.”

“Consumer Federation of America commends the families of Esther, Kipley, Kennedy, and too many others for their tenacity and strength,” said **Courtney Griffin, Director of Consumer Product Safety at Consumer Federation of America**. “We also applaud Senators Baldwin, Casey, and Collins for acting against a dangerous, unnecessary product. There is no level of adult supervision to make water beads safe, and CFA looks forward to the time when water beads no longer injure children.”

“Kids In Danger (KID) welcomes the introduction of this vital bill and thanks Senators Casey, Baldwin, and Collins for taking this important step,” stated **Nancy Cowles, Executive Director of KID**. “Water beads for children should never have been on store shelves, and this legislation will remove them going forward. We urge families to dispose of any currently in homes or child care facilities and we thank the families of Kipley, Kennedy and Esther for their efforts to protect other children.”

In December, major retailers including Amazon, Target, Walmart, Michaels, and Etsy announced that they will stop selling water beads marketed to children. However, hazardous water beads will still be available for sale and pose a harm to children unless a federal ban is enacted.

Families should discard water beads immediately and stay vigilant because they may unknowingly remain in homes due to their small size. Learn more about the dangerous of water beads at [That Water Bead Lady](#).

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[Consumer Federation of America \(CFA\)](#) is an association of nearly 250 non-profit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.

[Kids In Danger \(KID\)](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by fighting for product safety. Our mission is to save lives by enhancing transparency and accountability through safer product development, better education, and stronger advocacy for children.