



Safe Kids USA's Government "Call to Action" 2009

Safe Kids USA salutes our national and state government leaders who recognize that accidental injury is the #1 threat to our nation's children and understand that a multi-faceted effort (similar to what the nation has done to address drunk driving and smoking cessation) is needed to eliminate this serious public health threat.

National:

1. Congress and the President should encourage federal government agencies to allocate stimulus funds in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* in support of injury prevention programs. As federal government agencies determine their spending priorities, consideration should be given to child safety initiatives that enhance families' health and economic well being. Congress and the President should also ensure that prevention is adequately funded if future stimulus proposals are needed. Safe Kids believes that injury prevention efforts not only save lives, but also save money.
2. Congress and the President should include unintentional injury prevention in health care reform efforts. Comprehensive health care reform must emphasize injury prevention techniques, which have been proven to save money and prevent suffering. Just as childhood immunizations prevent costly and deadly diseases, investments in childhood injury prevention can save the health care system billions of dollars. Injury prevention saves money because it employs inexpensive, low-tech interventions to avoid the most costly types of care – emergency room treatment and hospitalization. Safe Kids recommends that the federal government, through health care reform, subsidize safety devices (such as, child safety seats, bicycle helmets, smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors) for families who cannot afford them; provide insurance reimbursement for the purchase of safety devices; expand grants to community health centers in order to include injury prevention services; and continue federal funding for poison control centers across the country.
3. Congress and the President should support full funding in order to implement the *Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act* (P.L. 110-314), which was signed into law on August 14, 2008. This would ensure the modernization of operations and facilities for the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in order for it to better fulfill its critical mission of protecting consumers, especially children, from dangerous products.



4. Congress and the President should support full funding to the programs recently authorized by the *Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act* (P.L. 110-140). This would allow the CPSC to properly and fully implement the state law advocacy grant program that is designed to motivate states to pass or improve pool and spa safety laws by requiring “layers of protection” that prevent drowning and entrapments (i.e., four sided isolation fencing, anti-entrapment drain covers, safety vacuum release systems, among other safety devices). Congress and the President should also provide the necessary funds to implement the critical pool and spa safety education program required by the law.

5. Congress and the President should target increased funding to the several federal agency programs charged with promoting and improving child safety. These include programs housed at agencies, such as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), the United States Fire Administration (USFA) and the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC) at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

6. Congress should continue its aggressive oversight of the federal agencies charged with protecting children from unintentional injury to ensure each agency is properly meeting its mission.

7. Congress and the President should fully fund, and federal agencies should continue to support incentive grant programs that are designed to encourage states to pass child safety legislation, such as primary enforcement safety belt laws, booster seat laws and pool/spa safety laws.

8. Congress and the President should, through existing programs and the creation of new authorities, ensure that life-saving child safety devices (car seats, carbon monoxide detectors, smoke alarms, pool/spa anti-entrapment drain covers, for example) are available at no cost (or low cost) to disadvantaged families that could not otherwise afford them.

9. Congress, federal agencies and injury prevention stakeholders should work together to improve consumer product recall effectiveness so that dangerous products are quickly removed from retail store shelves, homes, day care centers and re-sale shops.

10. The U.S. Surgeon General, America’s chief health educator, should focus the nation’s attention on childhood accidental injury by issuing an official public health report on unintentional injuries and deaths and how, collectively, we can prevent them. This report should be a catalyst to generate a major public health initiative in the Office of the U.S. Surgeon General.



State:

- *1. State legislatures should address motor vehicle crashes by passing or improving:
 - Laws that require all children to be appropriately buckled in a child safety seat (infant seat, forward facing child safety seat or booster seat) or seat belt in the back seat of motor vehicles;
 - Laws that allow law enforcement to issue a citation if an officer observes that an occupant protect law is being violated; and
 - Laws that make it unlawful to leave a child unattended in a motor vehicle even for a short period of time.

- *2. State legislatures should address bike crashes by passing or improving child helmet use laws in all 50 states for all wheeled activities (i.e., bicycles, scooters, skateboards and in-line skates).

- *3. State legislatures should address carbon monoxide poisoning by passing carbon monoxide alarm use laws in all 50 states that require detectors in all residences, day care centers, hotels/motels and schools.

**The penalties for violations of these safety device use laws should be high enough to provide an economic disincentive for non-compliance.*

4. State governors and legislatures should ensure that their respective state public health agencies have adequate funding streams to support the country's injury prevention departments. For the last several years, funding has been reduced for state agencies to address unintentional injury prevention. An adequately funded state public health agency is the cornerstone of a state government's commitment to preventing accidental childhood injury.

5. States should pass laws prohibiting the sale of novelty lighters, cigarette lighters that are shaped like toys and are potentially dangerous in the hands of children. The availability of novelty lighters counteracts long standing public health messaging to our children to stay away from matches and lighters.