February 10, 2014

Honorable John W. Scibak
Representative
Massachusetts House of Representatives
Boston, MA 02133
By email: john.scibak@mahouse.gov

Dear Representative Scibak:

We hope that this tragic fact is becoming more widely known by the public: unintentional injury is the number one killer of kids in the U.S., as well as the most significant cause of injury. In terms of injury, falls are the largest cause of child injury, making up 31% of injuries. These are deaths and injuries that can be prevented. It is with that in mind, that we salute you for introducing H.1152 for requiring window guards in Massachusetts public housing. We hope that the bill passes and inspires homebuilders and those renting out properties to provide window guards. Moreover, it is important that leases and condominium agreements allow tenants to install them.

There are too many stories like this one: In 2009, 2 ½ year old Lukas Laboy was playing video games in a third floor apartment when he climbed on the back of a sofa and fell out of the window. The window was open and, not only did it not have a window guard, but it was not covered by a screen. We understand that the Laboy apartment was not public housing and that this bill does not cover private dwellings. However, it is important to start somewhere. A pediatric trauma coordinator at Baystate Medical Center said that that one hospital has treated 15 children for window falls in the past five years.

Just a few jurisdictions have similar laws in place, notably New York City, where the law covers buildings with three or more apartments. It is part of the tradition of Massachusetts to have one of the most progressive set of laws and policies to protect our children. Passage of this law would be one more positive step.
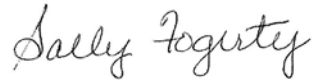

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Again, we thank you for your leadership in this regard and we are available to help you advance H.1152.

Sincerely,

Anthony Green
Safe Kids Worldwide

Sally Fogerty
Children's Safety Network

Maria McMahon
Safe Kids Massachusetts