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September 17, 2015

The Honorable James Timilty, Chair  
Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security  
State House  
Room 507  
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Harold Naughton, Chair  
Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security  
State House  
Room 167  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairmen Timilty and Naughton:

Safe Kids Worldwide appreciates the opportunity to submit this letter in support of SB1249/HB2110, an act relative to the installation of approved smoke detectors in certain residential buildings.

Safe Kids Worldwide is a global organization dedicated to preventing injuries in children, the number one killer of kids in the United States. Around the world, a child dies from an unintentional injury every 30 seconds. And millions of children are injured in ways that can affect them for a lifetime. Safe Kids works with an extensive network of more than 400 coalitions in the United States, including Safe Kids Massachusetts. We work to reduce injuries from motor vehicles, sports, drownings, falls, burns, poisonings, fire and more.

Safe Kids Worldwide supports SB:1249/HB:2110 because it would help save lives by requiring the following:

- When housing for 1 or 2 families is sold or ownership is transferred, the seller is required to equip the housing with approved smoke detectors based on rules of the Board of Fire Prevention Regulations (BFPR). This applies to buildings containing from 1 unit to no more than five units;
- The requirement for smoke detectors applies notwithstanding the date of construction, except for buildings where there is a certificate of occupancy;
- The BFPR shall issue rules for required smoke detectors based upon "advances in smoke detection technology;"
- Approved battery operated smoke detectors must at a minimum be UL listed and powered ("activated") by an operable ten-year, sealed battery source, or a comparable UL listed low voltage system.

We know from the US Fire Administration that trends in fire-related deaths have declined significantly over the past ten years. However, at least one child still dies in the United States from a fire every day. According to the National Fire Protection Association, 23% of fire deaths occur in properties where fire alarms are present but non-functional. Between January 2010 and July 2015, 28% of these deaths involved kids 19 and under. Working smoke alarms dramatically increase the chances of survival for both residents and firefighters in the event of fires.

Massachusetts has a strong commitment to fire safety as well as to keeping our kids safe in every risk area. By strengthening the smoke alarm law, the state will continue its effort to end preventable fire-related injuries and deaths for children, families, and firefighters alike.

Losing one child is one too many, and we don't want any parent to have to endure the loss of a child. That's why we're calling on this committee to stand with Safe Kids Worldwide in supporting fire and home safety with the favorable report of SB1249/HB2110. Thank you in advance for consideration and please don't hesitate to be in touch with any questions that you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anthony Green', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Anthony Green  
Director of Public Policy