

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 12, 2000

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**FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON ANNOUNCES EFFORTS TO IMPROVE  
THE SAFETY OF CHILDREN'S PRODUCTS**

**May 12, 2000**

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton today will announce new Administration efforts to improve the safety of consumer products, particularly those that may be harmful to children. The First Lady, joined by Ann Brown, chairman of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and a broad range of health professionals and consumer advocates, will unveil legislation to strengthen the penalty authority of the CPSC, and announce a public-private campaign to help the CPSC identify dangerous products.

This proposal is in response to recent reports of manufacturers repeatedly failing to warn the government promptly about defective products that have injured children, as required by consumer product safety laws. In the last five years alone, the CPSC has assessed penalties against 21 companies for failing to report serious defects. The products – including cribs, infant carriers, toys, and household products – caused hundreds of injuries, ranging from burns to fractures, and in some cases death. For example, the CPSC recently assessed a \$400,000 penalty against a major manufacturer for failing to immediately report serious injuries caused by a defective handle lock on an infant carrier. The manufacturer received 9 complaints of injury – seven of which had resulted in skull fractures – before reporting the problem to the CPSC. Many of these injuries could have been avoided if hazards had been promptly reported to the CPSC.

**STRENGTHENING CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY LAWS**

The First Lady will highlight a legislative proposal, sent to Congress today by the President, that calls for tougher penalties against companies that fail to promptly report dangerous product defects. The bill also would take steps to make product recalls more effective. Specifically, the legislation would: 1) lift the overall cap on civil penalties assessed by the CPSC; 2) make criminal violations of consumer product safety laws a felony instead of a misdemeanor; and 3) give the CPSC the authority to overrule the recall remedy proposed by a company if it is not in the public interest.

Increased civil and criminal penalties will provide a stronger incentive for companies to promptly notify the CPSC of product flaws so the agency can take timely action to protect consumers. Tougher penalties also will be more commensurate with the impact of product safety violations, which can result in death or serious injury to children.

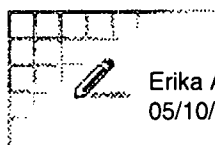
## **CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE REPORTING OF DANGEROUS PRODUCTS THAT HARM CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

The First Lady will also announce immediate efforts to protect the health and safety of children and families by increasing reporting of unsafe products to the CPSC. Unfortunately, in about half the cases involving the most significant hazards – where the product causes death or serious injury -- companies have not reported the problem to the CPSC. As a result, the agency relies heavily on consumer complaints to uncover information about dangerous defects.

The First Lady will launch a partnership between the CPSC and health care providers around the country to identify products that are harming consumers, especially children. A broad range of health care professionals – the American Academy of Family Physicians, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Medical Women's Association, the American Nurses Association, and the Emergency Nurses Association – will conduct a national campaign to encourage their member health providers to report injury-causing products to the CPSC. In addition, the National Safe Kids Campaign, an organization devoted to preventing childhood injuries, will activate its state and local coalition members to visit the places product recalls often don't reach – thrift shops, day care centers, schools, and hotels – to identify hazardous products still in use.

## **THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION'S COMMITMENT TO CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY**

The Clinton Administration has strongly supported the work of the CPSC and its mission to protect the health and safety of our nation's children and families. Since the President first took office in 1993, the CPSC's budget has increased 24 percent. In addition, the First Lady has had a longstanding interest in children's well being and has participated in several CPSC initiatives to improve the safety of children's products. In 1995, she helped launch the CPSC's "Baby Safety Showers" initiative, which educates expecting and new parents on baby safety. Last year, she kicked off a national campaign to alert parents and caregivers to safety hazards in child care settings.



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05/10/2000 10:39:36 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Ann O'Leary/OPD/EOP@EOP, Heather H. Howard/OPD/EOP@EOP, Eric J. Morse/OPD/EOP@EOP  
cc:  
Subject: draft advisory

Pls. take a look at this draft....didn't know if I revealed too much about the deliverables, but I think we're OK. Let me know of any changes by 1 pm. P.S. -- HRC will join POTUS at GMA town hall prior to this event. I don't think it will affect press coverage since it is an exclusive. Thanks --

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May 10, 2000

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## **PRESS SCHEDULE OF FIRST LADY HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON FOR FRIDAY, MAY 12, 2000**

WASHINGTON, DC -- On Friday, May 12, 2000, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton will host an event to unveil new Administration proposals to improve the safety of children's products. Mrs. Clinton, joined by Ann Brown, chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, will call for stronger penalties against manufacturers that fail to report defective products that have injured children. Mrs. Clinton will also highlight new efforts to ~~raise public awareness about the~~ *increase reporting of* ~~need to inform the CPSC about~~ potentially dangerous products. Other participants will include *health professionals* ~~key members of Congress, consumer advocates, and pediatrician groups~~.

**EVENT:** Child Safety Event  
**DATE:** Friday, May 12, 2000  
**TIME:** 11:15 a.m.  
**LOCATION:** Roosevelt Room  
The White House  
Washington, DC

### **Press Notes:**

Due to space limitations, this event is pool press for still photographers and television cameras. (Pool is comprised of wire photogs., network cameras and one independent pool camera) Open press for correspondents. Stakeout with participants to follow event.

First Escort from White House Briefing Room for pre-set: 10:15 a.m.

Final Escort from White House Briefing Room: 11:05 a.m.

*Note to networks:* The CPSC will provide a videotape of b-roll showing defective products that have injured children. Copies (on beta) will be available Friday in the lower press office.

**Credentialing Information:**

Press who are not credentialed by the White House should fax on company letterhead their full name, date of birth, and social security number to the First Lady's Press Office at 202-456-7805.

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