

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

“Nomination of Alexander Hoehn-Saric to be a Commissioner and Chair of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC); Mary T. Boyle to be a Commissioner of the CPSC; Richard Trumka, Jr. to be a Commissioner of the CPSC; and Grant Harris to be Assistant Secretary for Industry and Analysis at the Department of Commerce”

10:00 AM, July 28, 2021

Questions for the Record from Hon. Baldwin to Mr. Richard Trumka, Jr.

Unsafe Products. Americans are increasingly turning to online retailers for a wide range of consumer products, and I think it is critically important that those e-commerce platforms ensure their customers have accurate information about what they are buying.

I was pleased to see the CPSC recently take action against Amazon for selling unsafe products on its third-party platforms. The products mentioned in CPSC’s action include carbon monoxide detectors that fail to alarm, numerous children's pajamas that could catch fire and nearly 400,000 hair dryers that could electrocute people if dropped in water.

Question. I’d like to hear from our CPSC nominees about what else the agency should do to ensure the safety of products sold online.

Answer. That is an important issue, and it should be a priority. CPSC has an Internet Surveillance Unit (ISU), which monitors consumer products offered for sale online and evaluates their compliance with product safety standards. ISU also supports case development, and secures samples of products for analysis. I support CPSC’s plans to add additional personnel to ISU and to invest in new technology to improve the agency’s ability to detect dangerous products. CPSC should measure the effectiveness of these investments over time and continue to improve on efforts in this space.

Safety Campaigns. The CPSC has a number of safety campaigns that it leads to communicate specific hazards to consumers, such as the “Anchor It!” campaign to educate consumers about furniture tip-over hazards, and “Pool Safely” to educate consumers about the risk of drowning. The agency uses its website and social media to promote these programs.

Question. Again, for our CPSC nominees – how should the CPSC prioritize these efforts? How should it measure their effectiveness?

Answer. Educating the public about dangers should be a high priority for the agency. As should making sure that the agency’s messages are meaningfully received. Focus groups can be an important tool in structuring a message that is clearest received by consumers. Ultimately, the measure of a successful education campaign is whether it causes the prevalence of injuries at the population level to decrease over time.

Questions for the Record from Hon. Sinema to Mr. Richard Trumka, Jr.

Role of Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). The CPSC is responsible for protecting consumers from unreasonable risk of injury and death as a result of using consumer products, from off-road recreational vehicles to baby cribs.

Question. What priorities would you bring to your role as CPSC commissioner to ensure the safety of Arizona families, if confirmed?

Answer. I believe that CPSC should prioritize robust surveillance efforts to intercept dangerous products at traditional ports of entry, and that it should also prioritize its expansion into ports that handle large volumes of e-commerce shipments. I would also like to prioritize CPSC's search for new and innovative ways to address chronic hazards and to increase recall effectiveness. I would welcome the opportunity to work with you to learn how Arizona families may be uniquely affected by consumer product safety issues and how CPSC could help.