

**Raleigh** - U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC) today joined with the North Carolina Public Interest Research Group (NC PIRG) at a press conference to highlight the group's new report on hazards posed by certain toys. He also discussed legislation he supports in Congress, the [SAFE Consumer Product Act](#), to protect consumers from dangerous toys, following a wave of recalls of millions of toys for toxic lead, choking and small magnet hazards in 2007. The event was held at the Marbles Kids Museum in downtown Raleigh.

[View the NC PIRG Toy Safety Report](#)

Price's prepared remarks follow below.

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Good morning! It's good to be with you.

As we near the holiday season, we are mindful of the approaching tradition of holiday gift-giving. Now that we are grandparents, my wife and I have the opportunity to shop for toys for our grandson, Charles Albert. So I, like many other parents and grandparents in our community, am very concerned about the safety of the gifts we buy.

While decades of advocacy from consumer groups like NC PIRG have resulted in American toys that are safer than ever before, we still must be vigilant in ensuring the safety of all toys.

This year we have been confronted with lots of troubling news about toy safety. We've read reports of the unprecedented number of lead-based recalls, many of which were imported toys that were poorly inspected. Twenty million toys manufactured in China were recalled this summer because they were dangerous to children. Some of those toys contained nearly 200 times the legal amount of lead. We also learned that a popular toy was releasing a toxic chemical similar to the date rape drug when ingested.

These horror stories point to two things: First, parents need to be informed about what they're buying, which is why I am so glad that NC PIRG today is raising awareness through its annual "Trouble in Toyland Report."

And secondly, there is clearly something wrong with the regulators that we depend upon to keep us safe. Somebody is asleep at the wheel. This is unacceptable, and it needs to change.

In Congress, we are working to fix this situation. I am cosponsoring a bill that would strengthen and reform the Consumer Product Safety Commission – that's the federal agency that is responsible for making sure these products are safe for Americans. It's also the federal agency that, in my view, is under-staffed and generally under-resourced. Among other things, our bill would:

-Ban lead from children's products and paint;

-Require testing of children's products by independent labs;

-Strengthen the Consumer Product Safety Commission with greater resources for testing and with enhanced enforcement authority to punish the safety violators; and

-Ban unsafe and untested imported children's products.

This bill should go a long way toward fixing a troubled system. The White House doesn't want to go as far as Congress for consumer protection – the President is touting his own proposal. But this is an issue on which the President will just have to prove to us that his plan will protect our children as effectively as our bill. The indications are that it will not.

Reform is needed, but reform alone cannot account for the failure of current leadership at the

Consumer Product Safety Commission. We learned in a recent Washington Post article that current and former heads of the agency took dozens of high-dollar trips paid for by the industries they are supposed to regulate.

This is unacceptable, and it constitutes a clear conflict of interest. That is why I have also cosponsored a resolution calling on the President replace the current agency leadership. It is time for the Consumer Product Safety Commission to work for our families, rather than for manufacturers it is supposed to regulate.

So, in closing, I want to encourage all parents to inform themselves of the dangers posed by some toys. We don't want anyone to be a "Grinch" – but rather, to be mindful of what toys are appropriate for your child.

And I pledge to continue working in Congress to see to it that we can rely on our government to keep us safe from the hidden dangers of toys and other products.

Thank you again for inviting me here today, and thank you to NC PIRG for your good work.