

JULY 22, 2004

**SCHAKOWSKY CALLS ON MAJOR TOY RETAILERS TO PROTECT CHILDREN
AND DISCONTINUE SALE OF YO-YO WATER BALLS**

**SPEARHEADS LETTER SIGNED BY SENATORS DURBIN, CLINTON, SCHUMER AND
CONG. ANDREWS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), the ranking Democrat on the Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection Subcommittee, today called on major toy retailers "to discontinue the sale of yo-yo water balls," a popular product that has "caused near-strangulation, skin irritation, and permanent eye injuries," in children.

In a letter to major toy retailers, Schakowsky and others members of Congress wrote that the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has received 380 incident reports of children being harmed by yo-yo water balls, but "has done nothing to remove the product from the market in response to its demonstrated dangers."

□ The letter spearheaded by Schakowsky and signed by U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Hillary Clinton (D-NY), and Charles Schumer (D-NY) and U.S. Representative Robert Andrews (D-NJ), was sent to K-Mart; KBT Toys; Wal-Mart; Target; Claire's Boutique; and Oriental Trading Company.

"Based on the large number of reports and the severity of many of the incidents, including those requiring emergency room visits, incidents in which children stopped breathing or lost consciousness, and cases in which eye surgery was necessary because of broken blood vessels, we believe the risk of harm from yo-yo water balls is high," the members wrote.

□ They called on the retailers to follow the lead of responsible retailers like Toys R' Us, Walgreens, Saks Fifth Avenue, and 7-Eleven Corp and "to take positive action in light of 380 reported incidents and immediately end the sale of yo-yo water balls in your stores."

□ Below is the text of the letter to the toy retailers.□

July 22, 2004

Dear [] :

[] We are writing to urge you to discontinue the sale of yo-yo water balls in your stores. [] These toys have generated serious safety concerns that we hope you will remedy by taking yo-yo water balls off your shelves.

[] As you know, yo-yo water balls are rubber balls filled with liquid and attached to stretchy rubber cords. [] Our constituents have shared incidents in which yo-yo water balls have caused near-strangulation, skin irritation, and permanent eye injuries to children using the toy. [] To date, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has received 380 incident reports of children being harmed by yo-yo water balls, far more than the number of reports that generally prompt the voluntary recall of a toy or other children's product. [] The CPSC issued a press release on September 24, 2003 acknowledging that there is a "low but potential risk of strangulation from the yo-yo water ball toy," but has done nothing to remove the product from the market in response to its demonstrated dangers. []

Based on the large number of reports and the severity of many of the incidents, including those requiring emergency room visits, incidents in which children stopped breathing or lost consciousness, and cases in which eye surgery was necessary because of broken blood vessels, we believe the risk of harm from yo-yo water balls is high. [] Fortunately, despite the inaction of the CPSC, several retailers, states, and countries have responded to the dangers posed by yo-yo water balls. [] Toys R' Us, Walgreens, Saks Fifth Avenue, and 7-Eleven Corp. are among the stores that have voluntarily taken action to stop selling the toy. [] New York, Massachusetts, and Illinois have all taken steps to warn their residents about the threat of yo-yo water balls; and countries including the United Kingdom, France, Switzerland, Australia, and Sweden have banned yo-yo water balls altogether.

Given that the CPSC continues to receive incident reports each month of children who are harmed by yo-yo water balls that remain on the market, we feel this toy poses a threat to children. [] We urge you to take positive action in light of 380 reported incidents, follow the lead of other responsible retailers, and immediately end the sale of yo-yo water balls in your stores. []

We thank you for your attention to this matter, and look forward to hearing your decision.

[] Sincerely, []

[] Jan Schakowsky [] Richard Durbin []
[] Member of Congress [] U.S. Senate

[] Hillary Rodham Clinton [] Charles Schumer []
[] U.S. Senate [] U.S. Senate []
Senate []

