

JUNE 15, 2004

SCHAKOWSKY WARNS PARENTS ABOUT CHILDREN'S TOYS WITH HIGH LEVELS OF LEAD & CALLS ON CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION TO TAKE ACTION TO ELIMINATE THE THREAT

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today warned parents against high levels of lead that were found in many toys and jewelry purchased from vending machines. The results of a [Chicago Sun-Times](#) investigation published in today's newspaper found that some toys contained lead levels as high as 180,000 parts per million especially when lead in paint is considered dangerous at any level above 600 parts per million.

Schakowsky, who is the ranking Democrat on the Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection Subcommittee, called on the Consumer Protection Safety Commission (CPSC) *"to take immediate action to eliminate the threat of lead in children's toys."* Below is Schakowsky's letter to the CPSC:

June 15, 2004

Mr. Hal Stratton
Chairman
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
Washington, DC 20207-0001

Dear Chairman Stratton:

I am writing to express my concern about dangerously high levels of lead found in some children's toys and jewelry. The *Chicago Sun-Times* conducted a study that found that many toys and jewelry purchased from vending machines have lead levels as high as 180,000 parts per million. This finding is particularly alarming given that lead in paint is considered dangerous at any level above 600 parts per million and lead in soil poses a danger at any level above 400 parts per million. Lead, even in small amounts,

can cause irreversible neurological damage, delayed physical and mental development, and attention and learning problems. Therefore, I urge the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to take immediate action to eliminate the threat of lead in children's toys.

In the meantime, I have a number of questions about the standard for lead in toys and jewelry and the data collected by the CPSC regarding lead in children's toys and jewelry. It is my understanding that the current standard regarding lead in children's jewelry is that it must be coated and the lead not accessible. Is this the same standard that governs lead in children's toys, and, if not, what is that standard? When were the standards adopted and when were they last evaluated?

In addition, I would like to know how many children's toys and jewelry, including those from vending machines, the CPSC has recalled or banned due to high levels of lead content. Given what we know about the dangers of lead - and the fact that we have taken actions to regulate lead in paint and soil - it seems reasonable to me that the CPSC would be proactive in determining other dangerous products containing lead that can harm children. Is the CPSC currently investigating other toys or jewelry that might potentially be recalled because of lead content? Furthermore, I would like to know how many incident reports the CPSC has received in recent years involving lead in children's toys and jewelry and how many of those reports involved toys or jewelry from vending machines. Finally, because symptoms of lead poisoning may not be immediately apparent, does the CPSC have a mechanism for collecting data - absent an incident report being filed - on the types of products that most often cause lead poisoning in children?

I look forward to hearing from you and working with you further to ensure that children in this country are no longer at risk of lead poisoning from the toys they play with or their surroundings.

Sincerely,

Jan Schakowsky

Ranking Member

House Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection