

WASHINGTON, DC (*July 19, 2011*) – Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) sent a letter yesterday to the Window Covering Manufacturers Association urging the industry group to revise voluntary safety standards for window covering products to prevent future child deaths from strangulation. WCMA represents the largest number of window covering manufacturers and can influence substantial change throughout the industry.

“It is unacceptable that children are still being injured and killed in entirely preventable accidents involving window coverings,” Rep. Schakowsky said. “The Window Covering Manufacturers Association should adopt a voluntary standard that doesn’t just reduce injuries and deaths, but completely eliminates them. Anything less will prompt the need for Congressional action to address safety hazards that allow children to strangle themselves with unsecured tension devices and operational cords. This is a chance for the industry to save lives.”

With the availability of cordless window coverings and safe window designs on the market, there is no reason for companies to continue to sell dangerous designs that have caused 495 deaths and injuries since 1982. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, a child dies from window cord strangulation about once a month and several children are injured. Parental concerns over window blind safety have been well documented and the stories of tragic, preventable child deaths demand more action from the industry than it has taken since a federal study first raised the alarm on this issue 25 years ago.

The letter encourages the WCMA to resist implementing superficial fixes that fail to fully protect children from risk such as tension devices, which have, in the past, proven to pull away from walls.

“Cords need to be eliminated or completely enclosed,” said Linda Kaiser, founder of Parents for Window Blind Safety. “Children have died on operational cords with safety tassels, tie down or tension devices which have broken, and hidden inner cords. These strangulations result in a death per month and near misses once a week. These hazards are preventable and need to be eliminated.”

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Link to the letter is located [here](#) .

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