

Senate Bill Bans Water Yo-Yo Ball

**By Mike Isaacs**

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State Sen. Jeff Schoenberg, D-9th, has introduced a bill that would prohibit the sale of Yo-Yo Water Ball toys because of their danger.

The bill emerged from the Senate and House Community Affairs Committee this month, which means it is likely to face a full Senate vote this spring before heading to the House.

That's good news for passionate Skokie activist Lisa Lipin who has fought for years to ban the water ball toys wherever they are sold. Lipin said she is still after a national ban of the toy, but is pleased at the prospect of prohibiting sales of the toy in her own state.

"I'm very pleased to see Sen. Schoenberg address this very important child safety issue," Lipin said this week. "The toy is still being sold all around the country and in Illinois. It's right that the toy be banned in Illinois, but I'm still working on a national ban."

Lipin began her fight to ban the water ball toy two years ago after her son Andrew, then 5, inadvertently wrapped the stretch cord of a yo-yo ball around his neck while playing with it.

Since that time, she has tirelessly called for toy makers, distributors and retailers to take the toys off the market and off of store shelves.

Lipin has worked with local politicians, including Schoenberg and U.S. Rep. Jan **Schakowsky**, D-9th, to pressure the federal commission to change its stand on the toys.

Last year, the Senate approved a resolution urging the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission to ban yo-yo water balls after Lipin testified about the dangers she says it represents to children.

Schoenberg this week that the testimonies of Lipin and her son, Andrew, were so compelling that it paved the way for introduction of the senate bill calling for a ban of the water yo-yo balls across the state.

"I'm very optimistic this bill will pass," Schoenberg said. "There have been far too many instances in Illinois and throughout the country of these dangerous toys creating severe injuries and close calls."

Schoenberg said the bill could face some opposition among retailers who believe the penalty for violating the ban is too severe. Under the proposed legislation, each violation is subject to a \$1,000 fine and each sale is considered an individual violation.

Schoenberg said Lipin made an impression when she came to him about the dangers of the water ball toy.

"Like most parents, she is passionate regarding the well being of her child," Schoenberg said. "As the parent of young children myself and as a lawmaker, I can say I certainly welcome (Lipton's) activism."

Schoenberg said he immediately removed the water ball toys from his house after he began

working with Lipin and she made her case against them.