

PRESS RELEASE

Consumer Reports: New portion of COVID-19 relief package would help keep families safe at home during the pandemic

February 10, 2021

Budget reconciliation text from the House Energy and Commerce Committee includes crucial funds for public health, including \$50 million to protect people from safety hazards at home

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Consumer Reports today expressed strong support for a new portion of the federal COVID-19 relief package released by the [House Energy and Commerce Committee](#) that would direct \$50 million to critical work this year by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC). If approved by Congress, these funds would help keep families – and especially children – safe from hazardous products as they spend relatively more time at home.

“People should always be able to trust that their home is a safe place to be – especially during the pandemic – yet hidden hazards can put their safety at risk,” said William Wallace, Consumer Reports’ manager of safety policy. “The CPSC has been stretched thin for decades, and its scant resources today are leaving the agency unable to fully carry out its public health mission at a time when people are more vulnerable. This plan is crucial to the CPSC’s work this year to keep people safe, and Congress should approve it.”

The Committee’s proposal to direct an additional \$50 million to the CPSC would help the agency take a range of actions to protect the public. Under the plan, the CPSC would dedicate a special focus to products whose risks have been significantly affected by COVID-19 or whose sales have materially increased as a result of the pandemic.

“This proposal is essential not just because it would help the CPSC protect the public during the pandemic, but also because it would lay the foundation for a safer marketplace going forward,” said Oriene Shin, policy counsel for product safety at Consumer Reports. “This is a key first step toward the kind of long-term, sustained investment in the CPSC that Congress should make to bring about a stronger and more proactive agency.”

Specifically, the budget reconciliation text pertaining to the CPSC would enable the agency to enhance targeting, surveillance, and screening of imported products; and better understand how some products can enter the U.S. without scrutiny for possible safety hazards. The proposal also would provide the CPSC with resources necessary to strengthen its ability to monitor emerging product hazards online; improve the identification and elimination of online listings for violative products; increase its awareness and communication of product risks; and improve the CPSC’s data collection and analysis system, especially for risks to socially disadvantaged individuals and other vulnerable populations. Consumer Reports and other safety advocates have [repeatedly urged](#) Congress to significantly increase the agency’s funding and staffing.

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Note: With the continued impact of COVID-19 on health and the economy, Consumer Reports is working to give consumers the [latest information and CR advice](#) related to the pandemic.

Consumer Reports is an independent, nonprofit membership organization that works side by side with consumers to create a fairer, safer, and healthier world. For 80 years, CR has provided evidence-based product testing and ratings, rigorous research, hard-hitting investigative journalism, public education, and steadfast policy action on behalf of consumers’ interests. Unconstrained by advertising or other commercial influences, CR has exposed landmark public health and safety issues and strives to be a catalyst for pro-consumer changes in the marketplace. From championing responsible auto safety standards, to winning food and water protections, to enhancing healthcare quality, to fighting back against predatory lenders in the financial markets, Consumer Reports has always been on the front lines, raising the voices of consumers.

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