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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “Oversight of the Consumer Product Safety Commission”
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
August 2, 2012

Thank you, Chairman Bono Mack, for holding this hearing to conduct oversight of the activities of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. I am pleased to welcome all four CPSC Commissioners for being here today to provide testimony.

This month will mark four years since enactment of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (CPSIA). It will mark one year since enactment of Public Law Number 112-28, which gave the CPSC additional flexibility in implementing.

This law was a landmark piece of legislation. It fundamentally changed how we protect children from potentially dangerous products.

Implementation of this law has been the predominant focus of the Commission. The goal of the law was to transform the agency’s mission. The Commission used to be an underfunded, ineffective, reactive agency. Today, the Commission is still underfunded unfortunately. But it is no longer ineffective and reactive. Today, the agency is on a path toward anticipating risks to children and acting to prevent them.

No transformation is easy, and this has been no different. There were some rough waters in the early days of implementation. And a year ago, we had to act to pass some targeted fixes to the law.

But make no mistake about it; this law has been a success.

Thanks to this safety law, we now have strong standards for products used by infants and children, including cribs, toddler beds, walkers, and bath seats. We now have a product registration system that enables manufacturers or retailers of durable infant and toddler products to contact parents with recall or other safety information. We now have a consumer product safety information database where the public can file and view reports about harm from

consumer products. And we also have testing of products to ensure that they are safe before they ever make it into our children's hands.

And the results of the law are clear. Toy-related deaths have fallen. Recalls due to lead have declined by 80%, and recalls overall have continued to decline as products have become safer. Border enforcement is also up.

These protections matter to parents, they matter to children, so I look forward to hearing today from the Commissioners about their continuing work.

Thank you.