

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 40

WHEREAS, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of serious injury or death from more than 15,000 types of consumer products under the agency's jurisdiction. The CPSC has rated furniture tip-overs as number 3 of the top 5 hidden home hazards; and

WHEREAS, according to the CPSC, each year an estimated 3,000 children ages 5 and younger nationwide go to the emergency room with injuries caused by television sets falling or tipping over, and at least 100 people - mostly young children - have been killed since 2000 by falling televisions or other furniture; and

WHEREAS, in September of 2006, the CPSC warned parents and caregivers about the dangers of television sets and heavy furniture tipping over and killing young children. From 2000 to 2005, CPSC had reports of 36 television tip-over deaths and 65 furniture tip-over deaths. More than 80% of all these deaths involved young children; and

WHEREAS, the number of deaths due to furniture tip-overs is on the rise. In 2006, the CPSC reported 31 deaths from improperly secured furniture and televisions, with tip-overs resulting in an average of 22 deaths per year; and

WHEREAS, very heavy furniture items can potentially cause crush injuries, but more commonly when a large dresser, shelf, or home entertainment center tips, the resulting injury is often suffocation. Children become pinned between the tipping furniture and the bed or floor, unable to breathe or call for help, making it a nearly silent event; and

WHEREAS, the danger of tipping comes when a child tries to climb the front of a furniture piece. In these accidents, the child attempts to reach the top of the furniture piece by using a bottom drawer or shelf like a step. The weight of the furniture and the child pulling down in the front causes the whole piece to tilt forward. Heavy items on top of the furniture can fall on the child or the furniture piece itself can fall forward onto the child; and

WHEREAS, the committee of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) met in March 2007 to discuss and revise a proposed standard for testing tipping on dressers, armoires, and drawer chests. However, the ASTM can only establish voluntary standards and the proposed revised standard does not include other types of furniture such as entertainment centers, television stands, or any piece of furniture 30 inches in height or less; and

WHEREAS, while the ASTM, furniture executives, and consumer safety advocates are working together to form voluntary safety standards to address this issue, the increase in tipping furniture deaths and injuries to children demands mandatory regulation regarding labeling, furniture standards, and the use of anchoring devices:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Missouri Senate, Ninety-Fourth General Assembly, Second Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, hereby urge the United States Congress and the Consumer Product Safety Commission to immediately enact regulations that:

- (1) Strengthen incentives for use of the ASTM International's voluntary furniture safety standard for furniture tip-over hazards;
- (2) Strengthen incentives for use of warning labels on tip-over risks to be posted on all assembled and ready-to-assemble furniture and major appliances;
- (3) Strengthen incentives for all furniture and major appliances with a tip-over risk to come with anchoring devices that can be used to safely secure them to walls; and
- (4) Promote the dissemination of educational material and information to the public regarding furniture tip-over dangers and ease of prevention through the use of safety devices; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Missouri Senate be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for Nancy A. Nord, the Acting Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission and each member of Missouri's Congressional delegation.