

**Oral Testimony of Consumer Reports to the  
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission on: “Agenda and Priorities FY 2022”  
Oriene Shin, Policy Counsel | April 7, 2021**

Thank you. On behalf of Consumer Reports, the independent, nonprofit, and nonpartisan organization, I welcome the opportunity to testify about the CPSC’s priorities for the upcoming fiscal year.

The CPSC’s work has remained critical to keep the public safe from hazardous consumer products during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite challenges specific to the pandemic, we commend the CPSC for moving forward on many fronts over the last year, including on its product safety testing, compliance, and enforcement work.

It is hard to overstate the importance of the recent call for Congress to substantially increase the CPSC’s funding. This long-overdue injection of resources will help revitalize the agency and allow it to carry out its critical mission and meet the demands of today’s complex, interconnected, and ever-changing marketplace.

In line with its ongoing commitments and work, the CPSC should once again lay out a bold vision for the upcoming fiscal year and keep the following in mind.

First, we urge the Commission to promote a strong and inclusive safety culture within the CPSC that leads to meaningful changes in the marketplace. The agency should conduct a public initiative that speeds up its action and amplifies critical safety information to the public.

The agency also must find ways to better identify, reach, and serve historically disadvantaged and underserved communities. It’s also essential for the CPSC to hire and promote people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives, and for everyone at the agency to integrate inclusion and equity into all of their work.

Second, the CPSC should keep setting a high bar for companies and holding them accountable if they fail to protect consumers from product defects and related hazards. To achieve this, the CPSC should use all of its compliance and enforcement tools as needed, including mandatory recalls, unilateral warnings, and civil and criminal penalties.

Third, as the Commission takes a bolder approach toward compliance, it should also continue to empower the CPSC staff to be vocal and persistent advocates for consumers. The agency should always start from a strong position in support of safety and reject weak half-measures that companies may seek and would fail to fully protect consumers.

As a part of this, the CPSC should make frequent use of its mandatory standard authorities and fully participate in voluntary standards development, where it should push manufacturers to address known hazards expeditiously and completely.

Furthermore, the agency should remove any barriers to transparency that may keep staff from pursuing consumer-centric approaches to product safety. In particular, it is critical for the CPSC

to implement internal practices to maximize the public's access to important safety information to the greatest extent permitted by law.

CPSC leadership should also explore ways to implement strong and lasting internal mechanisms to protect staff from pressures that may delay or derail critical safety work. Staff should always know that their technical expertise, in the service of safety, will drive policy. In the long-term, these protections would allow the CPSC's work to result in greater public trust in consumer products, the marketplace, and the agency.

With respect to specific hazards in today's marketplace, CR urges the CPSC to emphasize a handful of issues in particular. The CPSC should keep working toward a strong mandatory standard for portable generators, especially to address the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. It should also remain vigilant and address hazards in infant or toddler products, including those with weak or nonexistent voluntary standards. Lastly, even as CR advocates for the passage of the STURDY Act in Congress, we urge the agency to continue working on strong safety requirements for dresser stability. With at least three fatal furniture incidents in just the last two months, it is vital for every commissioner to support having a strong mandatory standard in place without delay.

Finally, I conclude my testimony with a simple request. I respectfully ask the Commission to pay special attention to each and every parent scheduled to testify at this morning's hearing. Each of these parents' testimony is informed by their personal and heart-wrenching tragedies. Their participation in this public forum is motivated by their relentless pursuit to prevent future tragedies from happening to other families. Their voices must inform and drive the agency's work to protect consumers from preventable incidents, injuries, and deaths.

CR remains grateful for the agency's continued work to address hazards associated with consumer products. We look forward to working with the agency in fiscal year 2022 and beyond.