



January 14, 2025

President-elect Donald J. Trump
Senate Majority Leader John Thune
Senate Democratic Leader Charles Schumer
House Speaker Mike Johnson
House Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries

Dear President-elect Trump, Leader Thune, Leader Schumer, Speaker Johnson, and Leader Jeffries:

With the start of a new presidential administration and a new Congress this month, Consumer Reports writes to offer policy recommendations to help consumers in the year ahead.

Consumer Reports (CR) is an independent, nonprofit and nonpartisan organization. Founded in 1936, CR is known for our rigorous testing and ratings of thousands of products. We provide ad-free content to millions of Americans every month, including our 5 million members who live in every state across the U.S. We conduct hundreds of consumer surveys every year, and we investigate the challenges that consumers face every day.

CR puts this trusted data to work in Washington, D.C., where we share our findings with policymakers, and we advocate for laws and corporate policies that put consumers first.

As the first session of the 119th Congress gets underway, we urge the White House and all members of Congress to conduct appropriate oversight to ensure that federal agencies charged with protecting consumers are doing their jobs. They should carry out their missions under the law and have the discretion and resources they need to promote safer products, cleaner food and water, fair prices and business practices, and other consumer priorities.

Below are specific recommendations that would help accomplish the critical goal of creating a fair and just marketplace for all consumers.

Food Safety

- **Toxic food additives, chemicals and dyes.** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) should establish a transparent and scientifically-credible chemical reassessment process for toxic chemicals that are added to our food, and close the loophole in federal law (known as the Secret GRAS process) that allows food and chemical manufacturers to self-certify that a chemical is safe to add to foods.
- **Limits on heavy metals in foods.** There are currently no regulatory limits on the amount of heavy metals, such as lead, allowed in foods. Exposure to even small amounts pose a risk

because over time it can accumulate in the body and remain for years. The government and industry need to do more to limit exposure and protect babies and young children in 2025.

- **Prevention strategies to reduce illnesses linked to deadly pathogens such as E. coli, Salmonella and Listeria.** Finalizing the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s Salmonella Regulatory Framework would provide a systematic approach to addressing contamination in poultry facilities. The FDA should support and facilitate efforts to reduce contamination in fresh produce products.

Safe and Sustainable Products

- **Car safety and fuel efficiency:** We have seen great improvements in the standards for new cars, SUVs, and pickup trucks in order to improve safety, increase fuel efficiency, and reduce emissions. As a result, automakers have delivered technologies that help save lives, save drivers money on fuel, and reduce pollution. We urge you to continue on this path of improving these standards, rather than rolling them back and compromising consumer safety and sustainability.
- **Energy efficiency tax credits:** With rising energy costs at home, consumers are increasingly looking for opportunities to improve their energy efficiency to save money. We urge Congress to maintain the tax credits and rebates made available to American households for investments in products that improve home energy efficiency, lower their monthly energy bills, and limit harmful emissions.
- **Safe homes and families:** In our nationally representative surveys, we have found that Americans generally expect products to be safe. However, unsafe products do enter the marketplace and put people at unreasonable risk of injury and death. In recent years, Congress and federal agencies such as the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Bureau of Consumer Protection have made great strides to ensure that Americans, especially babies and children, are better protected. It is critical to maintain and strengthen these protections—not return to a time when consumers were on their own and there was no one policing the market for shoddy and dangerous products.

Digital Marketplace: Safeguarding Our Money and Our Data

- **Digital fraud and scams:** Policymakers need to take stronger measures to stop increasingly sophisticated payment scams and fraudulently induced transfers, including scams powered by AI deepfake videos and voice impersonation. Companies should share responsibility for preventing fraud and making consumers whole when they fall victim to scams. We need robust consumer protections to address the rising tide of losses for Americans, which, in financial services, exceeded \$10 billion in 2023.
- **Cybersecurity:** Weak cybersecurity standards and enforcement have left our critical infrastructure and Americans' personal information vulnerable to attack. Companies must

invest sufficient resources to continually monitor, respond, and react to the constantly evolving cybersecurity landscape.

- **Consumer watchdogs:** The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and FTC have proven track records as highly effective watchdogs for consumers' wallets. As budgets and priorities are determined, we strongly encourage you to uphold the mission of these agencies by providing sufficient funds, staff, and oversight. We are encouraged by federal officials' interest in placing a cap on credit card rates, and CR is ready to work with you and the CFPB to make this happen.
- **Safe and fair digital marketplaces:** Consumers should be able to trust that products and services purchased online are safe and legitimate. Congress should strengthen platform accountability and require digital marketplaces to thoroughly vet product offerings, respond quickly to safety issues, and properly screen products imported from overseas. Digital marketplace operators have a responsibility to ensure their platforms are not enabling the sale of dangerous or counterfeit goods.
- **Consumer privacy:** Companies must invest sufficient resources to protect consumers' sensitive financial and personal information. Companies should only collect and share consumer data that is necessary to provide their services and give consumers meaningful control over their data, and privacy settings should be easy to understand and access.

As part of our efforts to advance these policy priorities, CR is working with hundreds of thousands of Americans on a new campaign to limit toxic substances in food, starting this month. We are investigating predatory pricing schemes that are often fueled by companies using people's data to set higher prices for individuals, often without the person's knowledge. And we are currently testing the safety of personal care products that are marketed to Black consumers.

We look forward to working with officials in 2025 to advance the safety, security and financial well-being of all consumers. If you would like to learn more about what we do at Consumer Reports, we invite you to reach out to David Butler, our vice president of consumer impact, in Washington, at david.butler@consumer.org.

Sincerely,

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