



The New Direction Congress is responding to reports that American families and children are at risk because of lead paint in imported toys, recalls in faulty products, unsafe food, and questionable medicines.

We are making certain that families have **safe drugs, safe toys, safe food, by:**

- Enacting **the most sweeping drug safety legislation in decades**. According to Consumers Union, under the law, the FDA “will begin to have the tools and resources to protect the public from unsafe medications.”
- Ensuring that **parents have confidence when they purchase toys or products for their children**. In the coming weeks, the House will take action on **wide-ranging toy and child product safety legislation**, the Comprehensive Consumer Product Safety Bill, to:

20 million toys manufactured in China were recalled this summer because they were dangerous to children. Some of those toys contained nearly 200 times the legal amount of lead.

- ✓ Ban lead from children’s products and paint
 - ✓ Require mandatory testing of children’s products by independent third-party labs
 - ✓ Enhance the recall authority of the Consumer Product Safety Commission, to ensure that consumers learn about recalls more effectively and more quickly
 - ✓ Provide the Consumer Product Safety Commission with significantly greater resources to protect America’s consumers, including improved testing and research facilities
 - ✓ Ban unsafe and untested imported children’s products
- **Improving the safety of imported food and drugs, to:**
 - ✓ Create an effective warning and recall system for contaminated food
 - ✓ Increase the civil monetary penalties for manufacturers and importers who break the rules
 - ✓ Establish a more reliable food and drug import inspection system, including research on enhanced testing techniques and sampling methods

TOY AND CHILD PRODUCT SAFETY

Over the summer, more than 20 million toys manufactured in China were recalled because of various hazards. USA Today recently described the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), which is charged with regulating children's toys, as "tragically ineffective." The agency has lost 15 percent of its workforce since 2004 and employs only 420 people. Even the Commission's acting Director Nancy Nord has complained that there is only one "lonely" toy tester. [WSJ, 9/13/07]

The 110th Congress is committed to ensuring that the products our children use are safe and reliable:

OVERSIGHT & FINDINGS:

The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection has held a number of hearings addressing the issue of children's product safety, including on protecting children from lead-tainted imports.

Mattel CEO Bob Eckert told the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection that some of the 20.5 million toys recalled by his company this year contained nearly 200 times the legal amount of lead. [CNN, 8/15/07; CNN, 9/20/07]

80 percent of the toys bought in the United States are now imported from China, with the vast majority of these toys never being inspected.
[AP, 9/20/07]

The House Ways and Means Trade and Oversight Subcommittees held a joint hearing on October 4th, on the ability of the federal regulators to identify and take action to prohibit the import of unsafe food and consumer products.

Recent recalls of tainted pet food, toothpaste, and antibiotic-laden seafood have shaken Americans' confidence in the safety of the consumer goods on the shelves of our retail stores.

Witnesses testified about the lack of an effective system to ensure that Americans hear about recalled or dangerous products.

LEGISLATION THAT HAS ALREADY PASSED THE HOUSE IN RECENT MONTHS:

- Increase significantly the civil penalties the Consumer Product Safety Commission can levy (HR 2747, Rep. Rush) – *Passed 10/9/07*
- Mandate product registration for nursery items (HR 1699, Rep. Schakowsky) – *Passed 10/9/07*
- Require a uniform safety cap for gasoline containers (HR 814, Rep. Dennis Moore) – *Passed 10/9/07*
- Increase the safety of swimming pools and spas (HR 1721, Rep. Wasserman Schultz) – *Passed 10/9/07*
- FY 2008 Financial Services Appropriations Bill – Increased funding for the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) by 6.6 percent and increases the number of agency employees by 5 percent. – *Passed 6/28/07*

Recalls this past year ranging from bagged spinach and peanut butter to contaminated wheat flour from China have brought a measure of fear to the kitchen table. **Less than 1 percent of our food imports are inspected currently**—ten times less than in the 1970s—and an even smaller percentage undergoes actual testing.

The 110th Congress is committed to bringing accountability and responsibility back to the food safety system:

OVERSIGHT & FINDINGS:

The House Energy and Commerce Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee has held hearings focused on food safety for people and pets.

Dr. David Kessler, dean of University of California San Francisco School of Medicine, testified about our “broken” food safety system. Dr. Kessler testified: “We have no structure for preventing food-borne illness in this country. The reality is that there is currently no mandate, no leadership, no resources, nor scientific research base for prevention of food safety problems.” [Testimony, 5/2/07]

FDA inspections of food have decreased by 90 percent – from 50,000 in 1972 to just 5,000 in 2006.

The House Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee has also held hearings on food safety issues this year.

At an Appropriations Agriculture Subcommittee hearing, “former FDA officials blamed the agency's middle and upper management for its unwillingness to change. Benjamin England, a former regulatory counsel and 17-year veteran at the FDA, said the agency failed to act on more than 100 proposals for change, and he described the current food-import system as outdated, inadequate and wasteful.” [Wall Street Journal, 9/26/07]

The House Homeland Security Emerging Threats, Cybersecurity, and Science and Technology Subcommittee held a hearing on July 24th to investigate the federal government's efforts to protect the food supply chain.

LEGISLATION THAT HAS ALREADY PASSED THE HOUSE IN RECENT MONTHS:

- FY 2008 Agriculture Appropriations bill – **Increased funding for the food safety programs of the Food and Drug Administration by 10.2 percent**; also implemented mandatory country-of-origin labeling requirements for meat. (HR 3161) – *Passed 8/2/07*

DRUG SAFETY

Recent setbacks in drug safety have left American consumers with less confidence in the medications they take themselves and provide their families. **Just this month, 14 different types of infant cold medication (for children under 2 years old) were pulled off the shelves due to health concerns, side effects and other dangers to children.**

Fourteen nonprofit health care and patient advocacy groups recently lauded the new law, the Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007, as “an essential and significant first step toward restoring the safety of U.S. patients and consumers and reestablishing the FDA’s authority, commitment and credibility to protect the public health.”

The 110th Congress is committed to ensuring the safety of drugs and medicines:

OVERSIGHT & FINDINGS:

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee held a hearing on Avandia, a diabetes drug taken by more than 1 million Americans, about which new safety concerns have just been raised.

Dr. John B. Buse, a medical researcher, testified before the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee that a top officer with SmithKlineBeecham, now GlaxoSmithKline, called him a “liar” and threatened him with a lawsuit after Dr. Buse questioned the safety of the diabetes drug Avandia and pointed to evidence of increased risk of heart attack and chest pain back in 1999. [New York Times, 6/7/07]

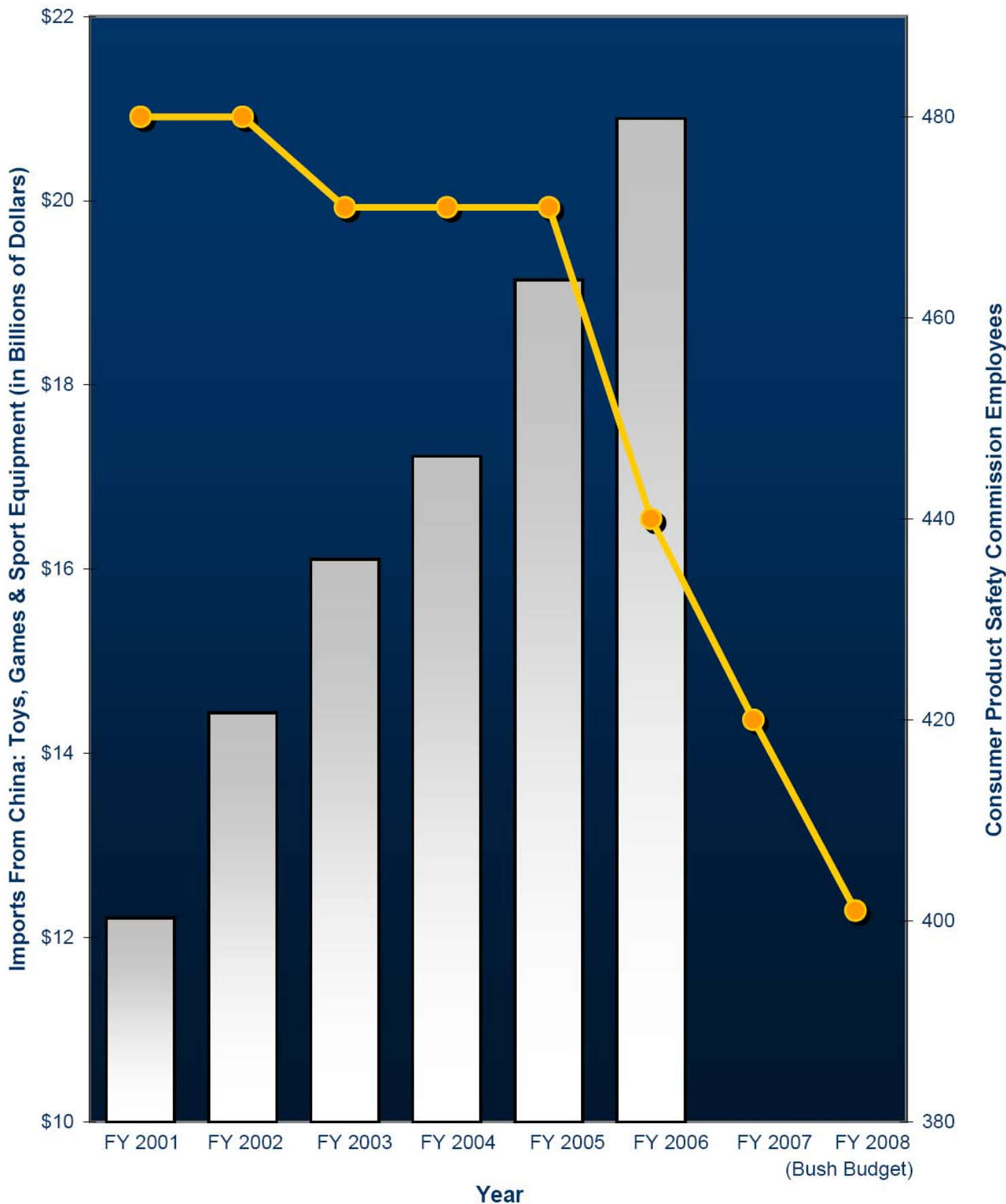
This month, 14 different types of infant cold medication for children under 2 years old were pulled off the shelves.

The House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee has held several hearings focusing on prescription drug and medical device safety issues, including on pediatric medicines.

LEGISLATION THAT HAS ALREADY PASSED THE HOUSE IN RECENT MONTHS:

- Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act of 2007 – Includes the **most sweeping drug safety provisions in decades**, including creating a new FDA program to monitor the safety of drugs after they are on the market; significantly increasing the penalties for drug companies that violate safety standards measures; requiring results from most clinical drug trials be made public on the Internet; and imposing penalties for false or misleading advertising of prescription drugs. (HR 3580, Rep. John Dingell) – *Signed into law 9/27/07(P.L. 110-85)*
- FY 2008 Agriculture Appropriations Bill – **Increased funding for the drug safety** activities of the Food and Drug Administration by 10.6 percent, allowing for additional staff and other resources. *Passed 8/2/07*

Bush Administration Underfunds Consumer Safety While Toy Imports Soar



TOYS RECALLED DUE TO LEAD

Purple Halloween Pails with Witch Decorations



Football Bobble Head Cake Decorations



Children's Toy Gardening Tools



Go Diego Go Animal Rescue Boats



Beary Cute, Expressions, Sassy & Chic Children's Metal Jewelry



WeGlow Children's Metal Jewelry



Thomas & Friends Wooden Railway Toys



Robbie Duck Kids Watering Cans



SpongeBob SquarePants Address Books and Journals

