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POLICY & ACTION FROM
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**PFWBS, CFA, KID, CU & ISC Respond to the
Opening of the Voluntary Window Covering Safety Standard**

Safety advocates call for a strong standard to protect children

Washington, D.C.—Today the Window Covering Manufacturers Association (WCMA) announced that it will be opening and updating the voluntary safety standard for window coverings, a category of products that includes window blinds and shades.

Parents for Window Blind Safety, Consumer Federation of America, Kids In Danger, Consumers Union and Independent Safety Consulting issued the following joint statement:

“We support this effort. The industry’s voluntary standard, in its current form, falls short in protecting children from the risk of strangulation posed by corded window coverings.

“In opening the standard, WCMA must prioritize that any revisions will finally address the strangulation hazard posed by accessible cords in an effective way. But today’s announcement does not provide the critical details necessary to know whether that will be the case.

“We will be at the table to monitor the discussions and press for a standard that effectively addresses the strangulation hazards on all window covering products. The standard should also help reduce the confusion consumers face when purchasing products with unclear safety claims.

“For this process to be productive, it must be open to all interested parties and incorporate the contributions of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and consumer advocates. We appreciate the CPSC staff’s commitment to participating in this standards process—their involvement is critical.”

Since 1983, 12 children have died each year and many more suffered permanent brain injuries from strangling in window covering cords. The rate of injuries and deaths has not been significantly reduced since the hazard was first identified in 1983.¹ These deaths and injuries typically involve children who are 8 years old and younger. Infants, toddlers, as well as school-age children have been harmed by cords inaccurately deemed safe, including those with free repair kits, break away cords, or retrofit safety tassels with safety devices such as cord cleats.

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Consumer Federation of America is an association of nearly 300 nonprofit consumer organizations that was established in 1968 to advance the consumer interest through research, advocacy, and education.

Parents for Window Blind Safety is a non profit organization that supports parents whose children have been seriously injured or killed by dangerous cords, educates consumers about the dangers of accessible window covering cords, helps create safer standards in the industry, encourages innovation of safer products in the industry, and tests window covering products for safety.

Kids In Danger (KID) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting children by improving children’s product safety. KID’s mission is to promote the development of safer products, advocate for children and educate parents and caregivers about dangerous children’s products.

Consumers Union is the policy and mobilization arm of Consumer Reports. Consumers Union works for health reform, food and product safety, financial reform, and other consumer issues in Washington, D.C., the states, and in the marketplace. Consumer Reports is the world’s largest independent product-testing organization. Using its more than 50 labs, auto test center, and survey research center, the nonprofit rates thousands of products and services annually. Founded in 1936, Consumer Reports has over 8 million subscribers to its magazine, website, and other publications.

Carol Pollack-Nelson, Ph.D. is a human factors psychologist and an independent safety expert advocating for cord-free window coverings.

¹ CFA 2011 Press Release. <http://www.consumerfed.org/pdfs/WindowCoveringsStandardPressRelease.pdf>