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Contact: Nancy Blatt
Roberta Sheridan
nblatt@sleepproducts.org
rsheridan@sleepproducts.org
(703) 683-8371

**MATTRESS INDUSTRY LEADERS SPEAK OUT
FOR BEDROOM SAFETY ON CAPITOL HILL**

ISPA Supports CPSC Standards Setting Process; Says Proposed Federal Legislation Is Flawed

Washington, DC (May 19, 2004) – Members of the International Sleep Products Association (ISPA) met in Washington with 15 key Senate and House offices to express support for the Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) work to establish a new practical, nation-wide mattress flammability standard, in contrast to the impractical approach taken in the American Home Fire Safety Act (AHFSA). The ISPA members explained that the AHFSA would discard the CPSC's important work, and instead legislate standards that are counterproductive to improved product safety, are not based on science and would impose unnecessary economic hardships on mattress manufacturers.

AHFSA – introduced in the Senate by Sen. Ernest Hollings (D-SC) and in the House by Representative Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) – calls for an early draft of the new California mattress flammability standard to be used as the new federal mattress standard. The AHFSA does **not** reference the *final* California regulation (called TB603), which is substantially different from the draft rule cited in the bill and was issued only after extensive public hearings and feedback from industry, consumers and others.

Under existing law, the CPSC is responsible for protecting consumers from product hazards. That agency developed the existing mattress flammability standard, which has been an important factor in

improving bedroom safety since the mid-1970s. The CPSC plans to propose a new federal mattress standard later this year. Unlike the criteria that the AHFSA would require, however, the mattress industry urges the CPSC to include in that standard the product performance criteria set by the State of California in the *final version* of TB603. The industry believes that those criteria will be the most effective way to improve bedroom safety **and** will be practical for industry to implement.

“The industry’s consistent position has been that any mattress standard must be science-based,” says **Allen Podratsky**, Senior Vice President of the Simmons Company and President of ISPA’s affiliate, the Sleep Product Safety Council (SPSC). Since the mid-1990s, the SPSC (with assistance from other industry groups) has funded several important research projects conducted by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) on mattress flammability issues. “The industry supports basing the federal standard on the *final* TB603 criteria because we know from NIST’s hazard analysis that those criteria will be effective in improving safety. We can’t say the same for the additional test requirements that the AHFSA would impose. There is no similar scientific analysis showing they will further improve safety.”

“The mattress industry has a proud 30-year history of responsible product safety stewardship. In the interests of improved bedroom safety and practical standards the industry can meet, it was critical that ISPA leaders share their concerns directly with legislators. I am delighted with the strong support we received from our members on this landmark event,” says ISPA President **Dick Doyle**.

“A key message today was that this is the wrong bill at the wrong time. The CPSC is well advanced in its work on a new mattress standard. Congress should let the agency do its job,” reports **Mike Murray**, Vice President and Legal Counsel for Sealy, Inc. Murray also serves as Co-Chair of ISPA’s Government Relations Committee, a group formed last year to focus on public policy issues that affect the mattress industry. “The industry wants a national mandatory standard that will be both effective and practical. The standard that the AHFSA would impose is neither.”

“In fact, I’m very worried that the AHFSA will undermine the important progress that the mattress industry and regulators have achieved so far,” says **Gerry Borreggine**, President of Therapedic International and Chair of ISPA’s Better Sleep Council (BSC). “We know from the BSC’s research that consumers want comfort when they shop for a new mattress. Most producers think they can maintain current comfort levels with the final TB603 criteria. But to meet the AHFSA test, we will

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need more and different components that will stiffen the mattress. That will ruin the plush feel that we have worked hard to achieve and that consumers now expect. Customers will simply spend their dollars on something other than a new mattress.”

Katie Geohagan, Government Relations Director for W.S. Badcock Corp, echoes those concerns. “My company makes mattresses that we sell in many lower income markets. The cost of the special materials we would need to meet the AHFSA test would price our mattresses beyond the reach of many customers. But we know from research by the CPSC and the National Association of State Fire Marshals that lower income families are those most at risk from bedroom fires. What good is a law that will make the new mattresses unaffordable for the very segment of our country that needs them the most?”

Bernie Roth, President of Sleepcare, Inc. and a 57-year veteran of the mattress industry, sums up the frustrations that most mattress producers have with the AHFSA. “My company is being hit by unprecedented price increases, especially for energy and the steel I use for innerspring units. Now, some in Congress want a standard that will force me to make beds my customers won’t buy and raise my costs even more – and all for no scientific reason. I realize that maybe Congress can’t intervene to help reduce my raw material costs. As for the AHFSA, is it too much to ask our Senators and Representatives simply to do no harm?”

Other ISPA members who participated in the Fly-In included **Joe Bowles** of Value City Furniture (parent of Parkersburg Bedding); **Jim Janik** of King Koil; **Joanne Mattiace**, on behalf of Leggett and Platt, Inc.; and **Brandon Wolf** of Wolf Corp.

Established in 1915, the International Sleep Products Association, www.sleepproducts.org, is the trade organization for mattress manufacturers and their component suppliers around the world. ISPA hosts the biennial ISPA EXPO trade show and publishes BedTimes and Sleep Savvy magazines.

The Sleep Products Safety Council, www.safesleep.org, is a non-profit organization established in 1986 by the mattress industry. SPSC’s mission is to provide consumer safety information, support research, and promote activities aimed at reducing hazards associated with mattresses and other sleep products.

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