



September 18, 2017

Honorable Jerry Brown  
Governor  
State of California  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

Safe Kids coalitions in California join together in urging you to sign SB 442 which, hopefully, will be on your desk in the very near future. In California, drowning is the leading cause of unintentional death in our youngest children one to four years of age. For every child who dies from drowning, it is estimated that five other children survive a water immersion incident, and too many of these children suffer lifelong brain injuries. It is also estimated that there are more than 1.1 million home pools in our state, and a majority of the state's drownings involving kids ages one to four occur in home pools. The bill, sponsored by Senator Josh Newman, has passed the Senate and three Assembly Committees.

Safe Kids was deeply involved in the passage of the federal Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Act (VGB), which set a standard for pool safety. Unfortunately, however, law only covered public pools. The measures proposed in SB442 embrace the spirit of the VGB Act applied to home pools. The bill would make home pools safer by encouraging homeowners to take further steps towards safety, and gives them choice on how to achieve safety whether it is through barriers, alarms or other measures. It is smart that the law is providing parents with decision making power on how they protect their kids in and around water.

The stories behind public policy efforts are also compelling. This is the story of Elizabeth and Jayce Thao, 2- and 3-years old of Fresno. They exited their Fresno home through an open garage and gained access to the swimming pool of the neighboring home. Police believed they entered the pool area either by walking through an open gate or squeezing through a wrought iron fence. Their parents reported them missing and in a search for them, police found the brother and sister dead in the pool. It was unfortunate that the home's garage was open, but the Thao family could not have chosen to properly secure the neighbor's pool. If it was the law, SB 442 would have provided stronger security for the neighbor's pool and prevented these two tragedies.

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Safe Kids is a global network of coalitions with the mission of preventing unintentional injury, the number one cause of death of kids 19 and under in the U.S. and California. Safe Kids Worldwide is a grassroots organization of more than four hundred coalitions throughout the U.S., including Safe Kids California and 22 local coalitions. We work on a range of risks confronted by children and the parents seeking to keep them safe. The risks include motor vehicle crashes, sports injuries, home injuries such as window falls and medication poisoning, as well as drowning. Based on research, Safe Kids educates, increases awareness and advocates for effective public policy solutions.

Governor, we know that you vetoed a similar bill in 2016. Respectfully, we urge you to reconsider your position. It is important that every home pool in California to be appropriately secured, whether it's a family pool or the home pools of families without children. The bill is an important step we can take to remove drowning as the leading cause of death involving kids one to four years old. Please sign SB 442.

Sincerely,

Safe Kids California, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Helen Arbogast  
Safe Kids Central Valley, Valley Children's Hospital, Kristina Pasma  
Safe Kids Inland Empire, Loma Linda Children's Hospital, Michelle Parker  
Safe Kids Los Angeles West, Children's Hospital Los Angeles, Chantel Ponder  
Safe Kids Orange County, Children's Hospital of Orange County, Amy Frias  
Safe Kids San Diego, Rady Children's Hospital and Health Center, Mary Beth Moran  
Safe Kids Santa Clara/San Mateo, Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford, Adrian Gallardo  
Safe Kids Greater Sacramento, Mercy San Juan Medical Center, Jennifer Rubin  
Safe Kids Sonoma County, Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital, Karli Tedeschi  
Safe Kids Stanislaus, Doctor's Medical Center of Modesto, Rena Lepard

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