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The Honorable Bruce V. Rauner  
Governor of Illinois  
207 State Capitol Building  
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Rauner,

We strongly urge you to sign HB 3773, which would help keep Illinois children and families safe in the event of a fire. This bill would require all dwelling units with battery powered smoke alarms to be equipped with self-contained, non-removable, ten-year batteries. This is critical because research shows that many homeowners are not aware of how smoke alarms work, with 6 out of 10 not knowing that traditional smoke alarms batteries should be changed every six months. The new technology would offer the highest level of protection possible, giving a family 10 years of security.

Since the beginning of 2017, there have been 49 home fire fatalities reported in Illinois, 8 of which involved children under the age of 4. A 2015 report by the National Fire Protection Association found that three out of five of home fire deaths resulted from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms, and dead batteries caused nearly one-quarter of the smoke alarm failures.

Two fires this year in Illinois demonstrate how working smoke alarms make the difference between life and death. A Springfield family with three children survived a fire that severely damaged their home this May thanks to a working smoke alarm. Springfield Fire Marshall J. Chris Raymond said smoke alarms are "quite likely what saved [the] family's life." Two children, 7-months old Ziya Grace and 2-years old Samari, were not so fortunate. They did not survive a fast-moving fire in a basement apartment on Chicago's South Side where a gas stove was left on to heat the apartment. A 6-year-old boy survived but he sustained burns on over 75 percent of his body. There were no working smoke detectors in the apartment.

Safe Kids is a 29-year-old organization with the mission of preventing unintentional injury, the top killer of children in the U.S. We work on road safety, pedestrian safety and challenges to a safe home such as fire. Safe Kids Illinois, based at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago, and its ten local coalitions are among the 418 life-saving coalitions around the nation. We support the bill because it will help protect families and children. Governor Rauner, we applaud you for your work to make Illinois children safer and we hope that you sign the bill.

Sincerely,

