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## **Congress Emphasizes *Prevention* in Passing Bipartisan Infant Death and CO Poisoning Legislation**

*Safe Kids Worldwide Applauds Senators Casey, Scott, Klobuchar, Menendez, Hoeven & Harris; Reps. "Chuy" Garcia, Moore and Thompson*

Washington, D.C. – Safe Kids Worldwide, a grassroots safety organization dedicated to protecting kids from preventable injuries, the number one cause of death for children in the United States, applauds Congress for emphasizing legislation to *prevent* infant death and carbon monoxide (CO) poisonings.

The "Scarlett's Sunshine on Sudden Unexpected Death Act," S.1130, was introduced by Senator Bob Casey (D-PA) and Gwen Moore (D-WI) and addresses the number one cause of death for children from birth to age 1. The bipartisan "CO Alerts Act," S.2160, will *prevent* CO poisoning in federal subsidized public housing and rural communities. It was introduced by Senators Tim Scott (R-SC), Robert Menendez (D-NJ) and Kamala Harris (D-CA), and Representative Jesus "Chuy" Garcia (D-IL).

"No parent should have to endure the loss of a child and Congress took an important step to protect children from fatalities that are *preventable*," said Torine Creppy, president of Safe Kids Worldwide, which includes more than 400 state and local coalitions throughout the United States. "This new legislation will save lives and save tax dollars. And it sends an important message to policy makers about the importance of emphasizing prevention to keep our kids healthy and safe."

### **Infant Death Law to Increase Data Collection, Provide Awareness Assets to Communities**

The "Scarlett's Sunshine on Sudden Unexpected Death Act," S.1130, was named for Scarlett Lillian Pauley, who died in January 2017 of Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC). The law will provide states, local governments and non-profits with grants to enhance nationwide data collection and death scene investigations into unexpected infant and child deaths. The goal is to increase the number of states participating in the CDC Case Registry and other case reporting systems. By establishing national standards, the hope is it will be possible to better determine and explain the causes of such deaths and develop evidence-based strategies to *prevent* them. Local grants would also help promote time-tested safe sleep practices.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), about 3,600 babies in the United States die suddenly and unexpectedly each year. In 2018, the CDC reported that the number one cause of unintentional injury deaths was unintentional suffocation involving children from birth to age 1. Eighty Safe Kids coalitions joined together in support of Scarlett's Sunshine Act.

## **Passage of CO Poisoning Bill Sends Strong Message as Winter Sets in When CO Risk Increases**

CO Poisoning spikes in cold weather because of the reliance on gas-fired appliances that produces the odorless, invisible substance. CO poisonings at the Allen Benedict Court public housing complex in Columbia, SC—including the near death of three siblings aged 3, 5 and 8—and the deaths of two adult men—created momentum for the legislation. There was scant knowledge that public housing was unprotected from CO poisoning. A carbon monoxide detector can be purchased for as little as \$19.

According to the CDC, at least 430 people in the U.S. die each year from CO poisoning and around 50,000 people must seek medical attention for CO poisoning. Most at risk to CO poisoning are small children and pregnant women. Forty Safe Kids coalitions joined together in a support letter for the legislation.

### **Congress Passes More Prevention Measures:**

Safe Kids also supported legislation that would have prevented CO poisoning fatalities in homes by providing awareness grants to communities, the “Nicholas and Zachary Burt Memorial Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act,” S.481. The bill had passed both chambers but was blocked in the last days of the Congressional session. It was sponsored by Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and John Hoeven (R-ND), and Anne Kuster (D-NH).

Finally, the Congress passed legislation to prevent fire and burns through the development of mandatory standards to make gasoline containers safer from explosions that can ignite from inside them. This additional prevention measure, the Portable Fuel Container Safety Act of 2020, was sponsored by Senator Klobuchar. On a bipartisan basis, the bill was sponsored by Rep. Mike Thompson (R-CA) in the House of Representatives. This bill is supported by Safe Kids Iowa, led by Des Moines’ Blank Children’s Hospital, with the family of 10-year-old Christopher Allsup who was killed from a gas container explosion.

### **About Safe Kids Worldwide**

Safe Kids Worldwide is a nonprofit organization working to protect kids from preventable injuries, the number one cause of death for children in the United States. Safe Kids works with an extensive network of more than 400 coalitions in the U.S. and with partners in more than 30 countries to reduce traffic injuries, drownings, falls, burns, poisonings and more. Since 1988, Safe Kids has helped reduce the U.S. childhood death rate from unintentional injury by nearly 60 percent. Join our effort at [safekids.org](https://safekids.org).