



June 22, 2021

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Duckworth, Portman and Blumenthal:

Safe Kids Worldwide and 22 Safe Kids coalitions join in support of your bill S.1259, a bipartisan measure seeking to ban the sale of crib bumpers as a hazardous product. This is an important step towards safe sleep for all infants, and one consistent with the Consumer Product Safety Commission's unanimous 2020 vote to develop a federal safety rule banning crib bumpers limiting airflow.¹

Crib bumpers are often marketed as something to protect children from hitting their heads on cribs, or getting stuck between bars, and well-meaning caregivers may unintentionally create an unsafe sleep environment that can lead to overheating, infant entrapment, suffocation, and death.² According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, unintentional suffocation is the leading cause of injury death for children under one year of age.³ In a study published in May of 2021 closely studying 4929 SUID cases, it was found that 74 percent of airway obstructions were due to soft bedding. In short, 1145 infants may have survived their first year of life had soft bedding not been used during their sleep.⁴

Every year, around 3.75 million babies are born in the U.S.⁵ Tragically, about 3,600 babies die suddenly each year from Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths (SUID), including sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), accidental suffocation in a sleeping environment, and other unknown causes.⁶ Additionally, while overall rates of infant mortality are dropping, racial disparities persist: Black non-Hispanic babies are still dying at over twice the rate of White non-Hispanic babies.⁷ The majority of these deaths are preventable, which makes them even more tragic.

Safe Kids is a grassroots organization dedicated to preventing unintentional child injuries, the leading cause of death for American kids. Working with a network over 400 coalitions based at children's hospitals, trauma centers, first responder agencies and community non-profits across the country, we provide programming, education and advocacy to keep kids safe at home, at play and on the road.

We applaud your leadership in championing this bipartisan and live-saving legislation.

Sincerely,

Safe Kids Alaska
Safe Kids Alabama
Safe Kids Little Rock, AR
Safe Kids Arkansas
Safe Kids California
Safe Kids Greater Sacramento, CA
Safe Kids Colorado
Safe Kids Colorado Springs, CO
Safe Kids District of Columbia
Safe Kids Delaware
Safe Kids Hawaii
Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition, HI

Safe Kids Loess Hills, IA
Safe Kids Illinois
Safe Kids Chicago, IL
Safe Kids Kansas
Safe Kids Cleveland County, NC
Safe Kids New York
Safe Kids Pennsylvania
Safe Kids Rhode Island
Safe Kids Anderson County, SC
Safe Kids Virginia
Safe Kids Worldwide

Safe Kids Pennsylvania coordinator Jessica Ritter assisted in drafting this letter, and Safe Kids Worldwide intern Taylor Savage provided research and drafting support.

Sources:

¹ Hwang, S. S. (2021). *The Call to Translate Data Into Action to Prevent Infant Death*. *Pediatrics*, 147(5). DOI: 10.1542/peds.2020-042135

² Scheers, N. J., Woodard, D. W., & Thach, B. T. (2016). *Crib Bumpers Continue to Cause Infant Deaths: A Need for a New Preventive Approach*. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 169, 93–7.e1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2015.10.050>

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Causes of Injury Death, 2018*. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/pdf/leading_causes_of_injury_deaths_highlighting_unintentional_2018-508.pdf

⁴ Parks et al. (2021). *Explaining Sudden Unexpected Infant Deaths, 2011–2017*. *Pediatrics*. DOI: 10.1542/peds.2020-042135

⁵ Martin J.A., Hamilton B.E., Osterman M.J.K., Driscoll A.K. (2021). *Births: Final Data for 2019*. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol 70 no 2. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15620/cdc:100472>

⁶ Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Sudden Unexpected Infant Death and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome: Data and Statistics*. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/sids/data.htm>

⁷ Ely D.M., Driscoll A.K. (2020). *Infant mortality in the United States, 2018: Data from the period linked birth/infant death file*. National Vital Statistics Reports, vol 69 no 7. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.