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## **House Bill and Study Could Lead to Risky Reforms**

**OLYMPIA, WA**—Consumers for Competitive Choice (C4CC) President Robert Johnson today challenged the scope of House Bill 2647 in the state legislature as well as a dubious study that has been promoted by the supporters of the bill. This broad legislation would appropriately ban the use of lead in toys. However, the bill would expose children to new and additional risk by banning certain chemicals that have been studied and proven to be safe by numerous government agencies.

“Parents and consumers should feel comfortable knowing the toys they buy their children are safe,” Johnson said. “Lead in toys is a problem that should be addressed. But, just as lead-based toys are flawed, this legislation is also flawed in that it seeks to cast too wide a net and also ban the use of chemicals that have been scientifically proven to be safe for use in consumer products.”

Healthytoys.org conducted a study that supporters of HB-2647 have used to promote the legislation. The study does not determine toy safety or potential risk through scientific experiment. By the author’s own admission the report is not comprehensive and states that the “Healthytoys.org ratings do not provide a measure of health risk or chemical exposure associated with any individual toy or children’s product, or any individual element or related chemical.”

HB-2647 would have the unintended consequence of banning a perfectly safe and thoroughly tested softener in infant toys. Phthalates are plastic softeners that have been used in products in hospitals and homes for more than 50 years. The most common phthalate in infant toys is a substance called diisononyl phthalate, or DINP. Multiple government agencies have conducted thorough studies of DINP; independent safety reviews by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the European Union have found DINP to be safe for use in vinyl toys. The Centers for Disease Control has shown that exposures to DINP are well within safe limits.

“The problem with enacting policy under these conditions is the law of unintended consequences, consequences that may well produce greater risks for consumers. A ban on phthalates means infant toys will be made with untested and potentially harmful chemicals. There is not one alternative that has been as thoroughly tested and cleared by a government or regulatory agency. The Washington State legislature should rethink banning tested, safe products in exchange for untested and potentially harmful ones,” Johnson added.

The Washington State Legislature is holding a hearing on this legislation today.

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*Consumers for Competitive Choice is an alliance of consumer organizations with one million members throughout the United States who are committed to the development of a competitive, vibrant consumer market in the communications, energy, financial and health sectors. For additional information on C4CC please visit our website at <http://www.consumers4choice.org/about/index.html>.*