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***Congress Passes Toy Safety Standards on Lead and Phthalates in a Major
Victory for Healthy Children and Healthy Toys***

Washington D.C.- In a major victory for parents and children's health advocates, Congress passed legislation establishing the first-ever national standards for the toxic chemicals lead and phthalates in toys and child care articles. The bill passed by wide margins, with a 424-1 vote in the House and a 89-3 in the Senate.

"Congress heard the voices from Minnesota and other states across the nation clearly stating that we do not want toxic chemicals in children's toys," said Deanna White, co-Director of the Minnesota based Healthy Legacy coalition. Minnesota played a key role in prompting this legislation from the leadership of the state Legislature.

The new law, called the Consumer Product Safety Reform Act, permanently bans three types of phthalates from toys and certain child care articles and temporarily bans three other types of phthalates, pending scientific review. The legislation will also ratchet down the allowable levels of lead in toys over a three-year period.

Phthalates are ever-present, found in toys, soft plastics, cosmetics, lotions and many other products. They have been linked to low sperm count, other reproductive effects, as well as liver and kidney damage.

Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar, a key player on this bill's conference committee states, "This is historic legislation that will protect the safety of our children, and it is long past time to get these toxic toys off our shores and out of our stores. This bill finally makes it criminal to sell recalled products, bans lead in children's products, and I hope will give parents some peace of mind that the toys in their children's hands are safe."

Retailers and manufacturers including Wal-Mart, Toys-R-Us, Lego, Evenflo and Gerber have announced plans to phase out phthalates. California, Washington

and Vermont have passed laws restricting phthalate use in children's products. Phthalates are also banned or restricted in the European Union and more than a dozen countries around the world.

The legislation deals a major blow to the chemical industry and Exxon Mobil, which spent millions of dollars lobbying against the bill in an effort to protect its phthalate market.

"This marks an important shift to a precautionary approach to protecting children's health. This is the right way to move ahead to achieve comprehensive reform of our nation's out of date system for regulating chemicals in consumer products," said Minnesota Senator Sandy Rummel, chief author of the Minnesota phthalate legislation.

A dozen states introduced toxic toys bills over the past year. Minnesota passed a phase out of phthalates with a two thirds majority in both Houses, but was vetoed by Governor Pawlenty. California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Vermont and Washington all have laws in place to regulate chemicals in children's products. These state actions, along with outraged parents, and concerned medical professionals, helped spark Congressional action.

Healthy Legacy is a statewide coalition dedicated to safe products, made safely. For a full list of our 29 member organizations, please visit our website at www.healthylegacy.org