



**U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
4330 EAST WEST HIGHWAY
BETHESDA, MD 20814**

**JOINT STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER ROBERT S. ADLER AND COMMISSIONER ELLIOT F. KAYE
ON RECALLS OF UNSTABLE FURNITURE**

September 28, 2020

Dressers, cabinets, and shelving units that tip over easily have seriously injured or taken the life of far too many children. In the United States alone, clothing storage unit (e.g., dressers and chests of drawers) tipovers have resulted in at least 170 deaths between 2000 and 2018.¹ These tragedies are preventable through design change of the product. Unfortunately, industry members have for years insisted that safeguarding children would affect market costs and industry operations so greatly that only the most modest of redesigns are feasible. Recent work by CPSC staff has demonstrated that these objections lack merit and that, in fact, attractive, inexpensive, and safe furniture is not only achievable, but also already exists on the market.

Genuine improvements to the voluntary standard on clothing storage units (dressers) in order to address tipover hazards have been extremely slow, leading to the Commission's unanimous decision in November 2017 to begin proceedings for a mandatory federal anti-tipover standard. We expect to vote on a robust proposed Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the coming months.

In recent years, the agency's compliance staff has also worked with a number of firms to recall particularly hazardous dressers, many of which failed to meet the requirements of the industry's own voluntary standard. Unfortunately, countless hours have been spent trying to convince industry of the necessity to address those clothing storage units that pose a tipover hazard. A number of less-than-adequate Corrective Action Plans (CAPs) were agreed to by some firms that merely provided consumers with kits for anchoring their furniture to a wall.

Offering consumers anchoring kits as the only stand-alone remedy simply does not suffice for protecting children. In many cases, customers will never install the kits either because they lack the skill or because they live in rental units that don't permit putting holes in the walls. And, given the health concerns stemming from COVID-19, many consumers legitimately do not want others in their homes making (even free) repairs.

Consumers deserve better, especially children and their families who are most often the unsuspecting victims of this potentially fatal tipover hazard. There is a simple remedy: companies should at a

¹ See https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/2019_Tip_Over_Report_0.pdf?kk87NU139Jb5NtMYAF.15ppcG4z0K66s at 20. An earlier version of this statement incorrectly cited 170 child fatalities annually.

minimum offer full and fast refunds to consumers who do not want to live with furniture that could tip over and harm children. This option for a refund should be communicated broadly utilizing all methods available to reach consumers and provided in a manner that encourages consumers to respond immediately and take action. Anything less is truly inadequate relief. We will not support any proposed CAP lacking a full and fast refund option.