

CONSUMERAFFAIRS.COM

Senator Wants to Recall Consumer Product Safety Commission

Non-profits could do a better job at less cost, says Rand Paul

03/23/2011 | Truman Lewis | ConsumerAffairs.com

It's not often you hear a conservative say nice things about Consumers Union, the non-profit publisher of *Consumer Reports*, but Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY) thinks Consumers Union would be a fitting replacement for the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).



Paul has attached an amendment to an unrelated bill that would eliminate all funding for the CPSC and six other independent federal agencies. [DC Insider](#) reports the bill is not expected to pass but it's likely to cause some sparks and reopen debate on the public complaint database the agency is launching.

Three years ago Congress passed legislation to significantly enhance CPSC's resources, including the new product safety database that lets consumers register complaints about product safety and see what other consumers have said, just as they have for years on many privately-operated websites, including ConsumerAffairs.com.

But Sen. Paul's spokesperson has been quoted as saying the CPSC is “unnecessary” and could be replaced by private, non-profit groups like Consumer Reports.

Tad DeHaven, a budget analyst with the CATO Institute, a Libertarian think tank, agrees. “As a consumer, I’m more curious to see what Consumer Reports has to say and less what the government has to say about product safety,” he said.

Consumer groups think otherwise. Several leading consumer advocacy organizations were swift to write an open letter saying that defunding the CPSC is “an outrageous effort that would endanger every American.”

The issue will be taken up after the Senate returns to work on March 28.