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Consumer Voice Commends Senators' Efforts to Strengthen Bed Rail Safety Standards

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (Consumer Voice) applauds the efforts of Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Tom Harkin (D-IA), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), and Al Franken (D-MN) to protect older Americans by calling on the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to strengthen safety measures for adult portable bed rails.

Portable bed rails are frequently used in long-term care facilities and in the homes of long-term care consumers. Some people use bed rails to help pull themselves up or turn in bed, or to get out of bed. Others may use a bed rail thinking it will prevent an older adult from falling out of bed or keep an individual with dementia from getting out of bed and wandering. Bed rails are believed to keep people safe, and many family members trust in the security of these products. In reality, bed rails can be extremely harmful. In an October 2012 report, the CPSC found that 155 deaths (129 of which occurred among elderly individuals) and roughly 37,000 emergency department-treated injuries were associated with the use of adult portable bed rails. The majority of these injuries and deaths occurred due to entrapment incidents where individuals became trapped between the mattress/bed and the bed rail or between bed rail bars.

The Consumer Voice is dedicated to preventing injuries and deaths among long-term care consumers due to bed rail usage. It recently launched a petition calling on the CPSC and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to establish minimum safety standards for all adult bed rails and prohibit the use of dangerous bed rails currently in use. To access this petition, click [here](#).

Sarah Wells, Executive Director, commended the leadership of these five senators in urging the CPSC to take immediate action in addressing the dangers associated with adult portable bed rails. She also praised Gloria Black, leading consumer advocate and recipient of the Consumer Voice's 2011 Public Service Award, for bringing attention to this issue and for her ongoing advocacy to prevent bed rail-related deaths and injuries.

To learn more about the dangers of bed rails, visit: www.theconsumervoice.org/advocate/bed-rails.

The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly NCCNHR) is a 501(c) (3) nonprofit membership organization founded in 1975 by Elma L. Holder that advocates for quality care and quality of life for consumers in all long-term-care settings.