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New Release

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Influx of toxic and unsafe toys alarms Villar

With the public starting to flock the market for the Christmas season shopping, Sen. Manny Villar said there should be an intensified effort to stop the influx of unsafe and toxic toys in the market.

“Authorities must have a heightened effort to make sure only safe toys are available in the market. As government officials, we are duty-bound to safeguard public health. But more than that, it is our absolute and implicit duty as parents to ensure that our children get the best care and protection against possible health risks,” Villar remarked during the hearing of the Senate Committee on Trade and Commerce.

Villar said there is a need to pass a law to protect children against potential hazards to their health and safety, especially those containing small components and toxic substance.

He cited the tests conducted by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission which revealed that toys manufactured from China used the most cadmium with 89% to 91% cadmium by weight.

“This is a cause for alarm as most of the toys found in the market are manufactured in China,” Villar said.

Cadmium is known to be a carcinogen and like lead, it can also hinder brain development and learning disabilities. It also causes kidney, lung, and intestinal problems, weakened bones and developmental defects.

During the public hearing on bills prescribing the proper labeling of toys, Victorio Dimagiba, director of the Bureau of Trade Regulation and Consumer Protection of the Department of Trade and Industry admitted that most of the goods that are sold in Divisoria did not pass through the certificate of conformity procedures of the Department of Health.

Villar authored Senate Bill No. 1308 or the Toy Safety Labeling Act, which requires consumer products for children to be marked with or accompanied by clear safety warnings or instructions.

Villar noted that the Consumer Act of the Philippines recognizes the need to establish standards for special packaging of consumer products for the protection of children but the law lacks additional measures to protect children against potential hazards to their health and safety.

“I filed this bill to fill the void between the existing law and the need to set standardized labeling requirements for certain toys and games of children. Toys are there to be enjoyed by our children, these should not hurt or harm them,” Villar said.

Villar’s bill requires the plastic covering and other packaging of a toy or a game intended for use by children 10 years old and under and include small parts to bear the cautionary statement, "Warning: Choking Hazard."

Marbles, small balls, and latex balloons, or toys containing marbles and small balls, shall also contain such warning sign on their packaging, bin, box, or covering "in order to prevent their ingestion by children," Villar stressed.

Villar said toymakers should also indicate in the product information if any of the materials used in manufacturing the toy is "toxic, corrosive, irritant, flammable, or combustible." The warning sign should be displayed in Filipino or English or both.

A balloon, ball, marble or toy game that is not in compliance with these requirements shall be considered a misbranded or banned hazardous substance and shall be withdrawn from the market at the expense of the manufacturer.

Violation of this act shall be penalized by a fine of not less than P10,000 but not more than P50,000 or imprisonment of not less than three months but not more than two years or both at the discretion of the court.