



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

In the Wake of Massive Furniture Recall, Ritchie Calls on State to Increase Awareness of Tip-Over Deaths

PATTY RITCHIE June 28, 2016



In the wake of a giant furniture retailer's recall of dressers and chests following the deaths of toddlers caused by their tipping over, State Senator Patty Ritchie is calling on New York State to enhance its efforts to make families more aware of the dangers posed by unstable furniture.

On Monday, Ikea announced it was recalling more than 27 million of its dressers and chests, following the death of another toddler who was killed as a result of a piece of the retailer's

furniture tipping over. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, to date, at least six children have lost their lives due to Ikea's unstable furniture since 1989, with the most recent incident occurring in February of this year.

In a letter sent today, Senator Ritchie called on the Department of State to let families know about the recall, and enhance efforts to raise awareness about the dangers of unsteady furniture. Last year, Senator Ritchie sponsored a new law that that resulted in the Department of State, Division of Consumer Protection developing an online public awareness campaign to notify parents and consumers of the dangers of furniture tip-over incidents.

"While this recall is a step in the right direction, the fact remains that many families throughout the country—and right here in New York State—have these dressers and chests in their homes," said Senator Ritchie in her letter.

"The online campaign created by the Division is helping to spread the word, but the legislation envisioned a more aggressive effort to prevent tragedy. This recall is an urgent reminder of the need to redouble our efforts and I am respectfully requesting that the Division enhance the aforementioned campaign, to help make consumers across our state more aware of the dangers posed by Ikea furniture, and other pieces of furniture prone to tip-over."

It's estimated that every two weeks, a child dies in the United States when a television, piece of furniture or an appliance falls on top of them. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, 430 consumers were killed between 2000 and 2013, when TVs, furniture or appliances toppled onto them. Eighty-four percent of these fatalities are attributable to children less than 9 years of age, while 65 percent of these deaths involved children between 1 and 3.5 years of age.

Locally, a two-year-old boy died in 2012 after a dresser fell on him at his family's Ogdensburg home. That same year, a two-year-old Syracuse girl was killed instantly when a cabinet and television fell on her as she attempted to use one of the cabinet's drawers as a stool to reach the television placed on top of the furniture.

A copy of Senator Ritchie's letter to the Department of State can viewed by clicking on the PDF at the top of this webpage.