



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

Senator Martins, FASNY Seek Ban on Novelty Lighters

JACK M. MARTINS March 7, 2013

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Dangerous Lighters Resemble Childrens' Toys

Senator Jack Martins, FASNY 1st Vice President Bob McConville, along with firefighter organizations, including the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), and the Office of Fire Prevention and Control (OFPC) teamed up with consumer advocates at the New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) to urge a on ban novelty lighters, flame-producing lighters that resemble kids' toys, to prevent tragic fires started by children playing

with objects that look identical to their playthings.

Senator Martins in sponsoring a bill in Albany to ban Novelty Lighters in New York State. "With this legislation, we can protect our families from accidental fires. There is, of course, no good reason for a child to handle a lighter and this legislation takes away those characteristics that are attractive to children," he said. "Quite simply, lighters are not toys and should not be made to look like toys. This important measure protects property and most importantly, it will save lives. I thank the Firemen's Association of New York for their support."

The groups recounted the tragic story of two Arkansas toddlers, 15-month-old Peyton Edwards and 2-year-old Breydon Edwards of Russellville, Arkansas, who died after setting fire to their apartment with a motorcycle-shaped lighter. Novelty lighters, like the one used in Arkansas, are designed to look identical to toys and are attractive to kids, as many of them resemble animals, cars, animated characters, and other typical children's toys.

"Novelty lighters are easily accessible and sold in many convenience stores, gas stations, hardware stores and at other stores across New York State. But despite their bright colors and stylish designs, novelty lighters are extremely dangerous items that too often land in kids' hands and, ultimately, lead to tragic, often fatal results," said FASNY 1st Vice President Bob McConville. "We strongly urge our elected leaders and legislators to ban novelty lighters to keep our kids, families and homes safe -- and to prevent senseless tragedies."

The groups held a news conference to highlight the problem and educate parents and other shoppers about the dangers of these innocent looking, but potentially deadly products. At the news conference the New York Office of Fire Prevention and Control, showcased several novelty lighters, including one that looked identical to a child's tractor trailer toy, to underscore the potential dangers of these products.

“Novelty lighters are incredibly attractive to curious children because they look just like their toys,” said Brian Lupo, NYPIRG Consumer Advocate. “The toy-like appearance undermines the fire safety messages that parents and fire educators give to stay away from adult products that produce flames for grown-up uses. That’s why we’re calling on the Legislature to join the other states that have banned these dangerous products. If New York doesn’t get these off the shelves, sooner or later they’ll get into kids’ hands, and then it’s too late.”

There have been multiple instances of deaths, injuries, and fires due to novelty lighter use amongst children across the country. Overall, fifteen states have passed statutes that either totally ban novelty lighters or allow county and local jurisdictions to pass a ban. States that have altogether banned Novelty Lighters include; Maine, Massachusetts, Washington, Oregon and Hawaii. States that have passed a jurisdictional ban (done county by county) are: New Jersey, Virginia, N. Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Utah, Nevada and Illinois.

“Commonly referred to as ‘novelty lighters,’ these toy-like devices naturally appeal to small children.” says State Fire Administrator Bryant D. Stevens. “Appearing to be harmless toys, novelty lighters have proven to be incredibly dangerous to young children and a ban, which is supported by firefighting, consumer and child safety groups alike, is the best way to keep these dangerous products out of the hands of youngsters.”

The firefighter associations and NYPIRG are urging that the sale of these dangerous toy-like lighters be made illegal in New York to prevent senseless, preventable tragedies. The groups support banning novelty lighters because it would ultimately lower the amount of fires started by children.

About FASNY Founded in 1872, the Firemen’s Association of the State of New York (FASNY) represents the interests of the more than 90,000 volunteer firefighters in New York State.

For more information, visit www.fasny.com.