

## Testimony of Trista Hamsmith

Founder & Executive Director, Reese's Purpose  
Hearing on the Independence of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission  
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Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Before I begin I'd like to stress that I am not here for political theater. I am not here to take sides, to get swept up in the showboating or place blame. I'm here to talk about protecting people's lives. The work of the Consumer Product Safety Commission should not be tangled up in partisan games. We're talking about kids choking on toys, families burned by faulty electronics, seniors injured by unsafe products. These are urgent and serious situations that cannot afford to be caught up in distractions or drama. We need to focus on solutions and moving forward.

It's time to stop pointing fingers, and get back to doing what we need the CPSC to do: protect the American people.

My name is Trista Hamsmith. I'm a mother, an advocate, and the founder of **Reese's Purpose**, a nonprofit created in honor of my daughter, **Reese**, who died at 18 months old after swallowing a button battery from a remote control.

She was curious, joyful, and full of life. And then—she was gone.

The battery burned a hole through her esophagus. Despite multiple doctor visits and X-rays, it wasn't detected in time. We fought through hospital stays, surgeries, and setbacks. But in the end, the damage was too great. I held her in my arms as she slipped away.

Since then, I have committed my life to fighting for product safety and protecting other families from the pain we've endured. With the help of many of you in this room, **we passed Reese's Law**—a bipartisan victory that proved what can happen when we put politics aside and focus on protecting our children.

That's the spirit we need more of. Because **safety – especially for children – should not be a political issue. Keeping our children safe is a literal life-or-death issue.**

That's why I am here today: to urge you not to move the Consumer Product Safety Commission under the Department of Health and Human Services.

# CPSC Forum

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The CPSC must remain **an independent agency**. It is the only agency solely dedicated to consumer product safety. Moving it under HHS risks burying its mission beneath layers of bureaucracy, distracting from its core purpose, and ultimately **costing lives**.

In the current landscape, the system is already struggling. **It isn't functioning as it should even now**. The CPSC is underfunded, overwhelmed, and often too slow to act. Critical hazards are slipping through the cracks, and families are paying the price.

We need a stronger, faster, and more transparent CPSC, not one that is diluted or diverted. Putting it under a massive agency like HHS won't fix anything. In fact, it will make things worse.

I've spoken to families whose children were injured by toys, furniture, batteries, magnets, and more. Their grief is raw. Their anger is justified. And their message is clear: **we need action—not red tape. We need accountability—not excuses**.

**Above all else - we need both sides of the aisle working together.** We saw it work with Reese's Law. Our kids don't care about party lines. Parents trying to keep their homes safe aren't thinking about political wins. They just want to know that someone is protecting them, someone has the best interest of all of our safety in mind.

That someone is watching out so we can help the next Reese.

If we allow dysfunction or partisanship to weaken the CPSC even further, it won't be a bureaucratic failure. It will be a **moral one**.

So I'm asking you, not just as a grieving mother, but as someone who believes in the power of this body to do what's right—**please keep the CPSC independent. Invest in it. Strengthen it. Support it.**

**Lives depend on it.**

Reese's did. And so do countless others.

Thank you.