

May 14, 2007

Mr. Timothy McNulty
Editor
Chicago Tribune
435 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611-4041

Ms. Patricia Callahan
Staff Reporter
Chicago Tribune
435 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611-4041

Dear Mr. McNulty and Ms. Callahan:

I am writing to express my appreciation to the *Chicago Tribune* for bringing the importance of standards and conformity assessment to the attention of your readers.

Since its formation in 1918, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has coordinated standardization activities in the United States and has represented U.S. stakeholders in standard-setting and conformity assessment bodies around the globe.

From the largest construction equipment to nanoparticles, and from the most detailed applications to the broadest definition of a systems implementation, ANSI-accredited standards developers have produced thousands of voluntary consensus standards. A key element of the Institute's accreditation process is a commitment from the developer that all standards will be created and maintained in an open, neutral and balanced forum in which all interested stakeholders can have a voice. Consumers sit alongside representatives of industry and government to develop consensus on the standards needed to keep us safe, healthy and improve our quality of life. The success of this system depends upon broad-based awareness and active engagement by consumers across the nation and around the globe – Ms. Callahan's article of May 7, 2007 ("Inside the botched recall of a dangerous toy") helps to spread this message.

Certain statements in the article, however, must be challenged. In particular: "... The loudest voices in rewriting safety rules for toys belong to the toymakers themselves."

This statement does not give appropriate recognition to the 100+ years the U.S. standards community has devoted to bringing together a broad and balanced range of stakeholders to address safety risks before a product ever gets to market. Our system is based upon the active partnership that comes when representatives from industry, government, and academia work hand-in-hand with consumers and consumer organizations to develop standards that reduce or eliminate risks to consumers. No single person or entity can control a standards committee or its agenda.

We encourage the readers of the *Chicago Tribune*, and indeed *all* consumers, to identify product safety incidents and risks directly to the relevant manufacturer, and to also advise groups such as the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and Consumers Union. The standards community has a long history of working with these organizations to address safety issues and risk mitigation.

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(continued)

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Standards are not only developed in response to injuries, hazards or other identified safety risks, but more often in a proactive manner to prevent injuries from known hazards.

Thank you, in advance, for communicating to your readers ANSI's invitation to have the voice of consumers actively represented at the standards-setting table.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "S. Joe Bhatia". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping tail.

S. Joe Bhatia
President and CEO