

## Statement of Aliza Sperling Staff Attorney

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Every five days, a child in the United States dies from choking on food. More than 90% of these children are younger than 5 years old. Further, more than 10,000 children are taken to emergency rooms each year for injuries sustained from choking on a food.

Ironically, the all American hot dog is one of the most dangerous choking hazards for kids. It often comes in packages clearly marketed for children, but with no information on how parents should prepare and serve this food to youngsters.

Fortunately, tragedies like these can be prevented through better labeling. Today, we are appealing to producers of more than 300 brands of foods that kids can choke on, including hot dogs, candy, popcorn, peanut butter, nuts, and certain fruits and vegetables, to add a simple safety label to their products. The label would inform parents that such foods should either not be served to children under five or served only if they are chopped, sliced or prepared in some other manner that makes them safe for consumption by young children. It's a simple step – but one that will save kids' lives. We hope the industry acts promptly.

This toy and this food can both cause a child to choke and die. The toy carries a warning label – the food product doesn't. Just as we protect our children from choking hazards from toys like these, shouldn't we also protect our children from choking on foods like these? Some food companies are already placing warning labels on their products. If these companies can do it, then their competitors should do it as well.

But labeling is just the first step in protecting kids from food choking hazards. Representatives Honda and Ferguson have heard the cries of many families and are introducing legislation today that will require the Food and Drug Administration to take additional steps to reduce the number of children that die from choking on foods each year. We urge the FDA and the Administration to work with Representatives Honda and Ferguson to make this bipartisan legislation a reality and to save American families from any more needless tragedies.