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President Bush Signs into Law The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act of 2007

*Three years of pool safety advocacy pays off for Safe Kids, Baker family
in new, life-saving law*

Washington, D.C. -- In a move that child safety advocates say will save the lives of thousands of children, President Bush today signed The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act of 2007. The legislation provides incentives for states to adopt comprehensive pool safety laws that will protect children from life-threatening injuries and horrible deaths from dangerous pool & spa drains.

The law, which was included as part of a comprehensive energy bill (H.R. 6), passed the House on Dec. 18 by a vote of 314-100. The Senate approved the bill on Dec. 13.

The law is named for the granddaughter of former Secretary of State James A. Baker, III, who joined Graeme's mother, Nancy Baker, and Safe Kids USA in a three-year advocacy campaign for the legislation. In 2002 at the age of 7, Graeme Baker died in a spa after the powerful suction of a drain entrapped her under water.

"While the loss of our beloved Graeme will be with us always, our hearts have been lifted by the passage of this common-sense piece of legislation that will save lives," James Baker said. "We are grateful to President Bush and the members of Congress who are making sure other children are protected from the kind of accident that took Graeme from us."

Nancy Baker agreed. "This legislation helps give meaning to the tragic circumstances that took her life and the lives of many other children," Baker said. "It is a tribute to these children and their grieving families that this bill will prevent injuries and death as a result of drowning. Graeme would be honored that it is in her name."

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Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act of 2007

Page 2

Specifically, the law will:

- **Prohibit the manufacture, sale or distribution of drain covers that do not meet anti-entrapment safety standards established by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.** The legislation includes a directive for the CPSC to establish a safety standard for anti-entrapment drain covers. This would ensure that all drain covers available in the marketplace would conform to certain safety criteria.
- **Create an incentive grant program for states to adopt comprehensive pool and spa safety laws requiring certain safety devices in swimming pools and spas to protect children.** The legislation would provide grants to states that pass a comprehensive swimming pool and spa safety law. The bill would require states to use funds, if awarded, to hire and train personnel for the proper enforcement of state law; and educate pool owners and operators, pool construction and installation companies, pool service companies and the public about the state law and about drowning prevention practices.
- **Establish a national drowning prevention education program within the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.** The bill would require the CPSC to create and administer an educational program to inform the public about ways to prevent drowning and entrapment in swimming pools and spas, and execute a national media campaign to promote awareness of pool and spa safety.
- **Require public pools to incorporate anti-entrapment drain covers and other layers of protection.** The legislation would require that each public pool and spa be equipped with anti-entrapment drain covers and other layers of protection, such as safety vacuum release systems.

Victory for children, parents, caregivers, and safety advocates

Drowning remains the second leading killer of children under the age of 14. The law is the result of three years of work by Safe Kids USA, the Baker family, Congressional leaders, and dozens of other stakeholders.

“Safe Kids USA and the children we work to protect from accidental injury and death owe a huge debt of gratitude to U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz and U.S. Sens. Mark Pryor and Ted Stevens, the original House and Senate sponsors of the bill,” said Alan Korn, public policy director of Safe Kids USA. “Their persistence and determination were key to moving the legislation, and will mean that many children’s lives will be saved.”

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Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act of 2007
Page 3

Korn also credited other members of Congress whose help was invaluable during the legislative process. These included U.S. Reps. Bobby Rush, Cliff Stearns, Frank Wolf, John Dingell, and Joe Barton, along with U.S. Sens. Christopher Dodd, Daniel Inouye, and Amy Klobuchar. “Their dedication and confidence in this small, simple piece of legislation will have huge impact in preventing the needless injuries and deaths of children,” Korn said.

For more information, visit [The Virginia Graeme Baker Pool & Spa Bill Web Page](http://www.usa.safekids.org) at www.usa.safekids.org

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Safe Kids Worldwide is a global network of organizations whose mission is to prevent accidental childhood injury, a leading killer of children 14 and under. More than 450 coalitions in 16 countries bring together health and safety experts, educators, corporations, foundations, governments and volunteers to educate and protect families. The organization was founded in 1987 by Children’s National Medical Center with support from Johnson & Johnson.

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