

## **Johnson's Remarks on Truth-in-Packaging & Child Protection Bills**

**President Lyndon B. Johnson**

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Mr. Vice President, Secretary Connor, Senator Hart, Congressman Staggers, and Members of Congress:

First I ask your indulgence and understanding because I have been talking to Speaker McCormack, Senator Mansfield, and Senator Dirksen, reporting on my trip and my physical condition. I thought that rather desirable and necessary. And I know you will pardon my being a little late.

We have come here this evening to fulfill two obligations that we have to the American family.

- We are here to defend truth.
- We are here to avoid tragedy.

The two laws that I shall sign this evening will help the American housewife to save her pennies and dimes, and the American mother to save the lives of her children.

The first law is the Fair packaging and Labeling Act. Its purpose is to uphold truth. Its target is labels that lie, packages that confuse, practices that too often deny the consumer a fair test and a dear choice in the shopping place.

This is a strong but simple law. It requires the manufacturer to tell the shopper clearly and understandably exactly what is in the package, who made it, how much it contains, how much it costs.

The housewife should not need a scale or a yardstick or a slide rule or computer when she shops. This law will eliminate that need. The housewife should not have to worry which is bigger—the full jumbo quart or the giant economy quart. This law will free her from that uncertainty and that problem. It will protect her from being shortchanged by slack filling where a box is made bigger than its contents.

This law is one weapon against high prices. It will mean that the American family will get full and fair value for every penny, dime, and dollar that that family spends.

The great majority of American manufacturers, I believe—and I hope—will welcome this law, because it protects the honest manufacturer against the dishonest competitors. It encourages fair competition, competition that is based on quality and value and price. It



reflects our very strong belief that American producers can meet and want to meet the test of truth in what they produce and what they sell.

We are going to put this law to work right away. I have asked our able Secretary of Commerce, John Connor, to proceed immediately to call in those industries where the congressional hearings have shown protection to be most needed.

This Fair Packaging and Labeling Act will go a long way toward ending confusion and restoring truth in the marketplace.

The second law that I will sign today, the Child Protection Act, will do no less in protecting the American family from needless tragedy.

It will ban the sale or use of toys and other children's articles that contain dangerous or deadly substances.

It will ban the sale of other household articles so hazardous that even labels cannot make them safe.

- Now there is a law that says the eyes of a doll will not be poisonous beans.
- Now there is a law that says what looks like candy will not be deadly firecracker balls.
- Now there is a law that says Johnny will not die because his toy truck was painted with a poison.

Both these laws offer sweeping new protection to the American family.

Both break new ground for the Federal Government- But both, I think, are very much in our American tradition. Thomas Jefferson said that the first object of government was the care of human life and happiness, and that is the single object of both of these laws.

They are based upon the principle of fair dealing which created the Pure Food and Drug Act, the Fiber Products Identification Act, and other humanitarian laws which have protected American mothers and fathers and children for generations.

The two really landmark laws that I will sign here this evening are fitting companions to the other safeguards enacted by the great 89th Congress—the Traffic Safety Act and the Tire Safety Act.

These two laws confirm the historic record of compassion, wisdom, and achievement that has established this as the great 89th Congress. They further establish that Congress in the hearts of the people.

We are very proud, particularly of those Members who have come here this evening, those of you who led and directed this fight. Also, we are very grateful to you, because we are fathers, mothers, and families, because we are wage earners, housewives, and consumers—because we are Americans.

And we are better protected now by American laws, thanks to you. We will try to give them the best execution that is possible.

A great counselor of mine said to me, "You can take a good law and give it bad administration and it won't work. You can take a bad law and give it good administration and get by with it."

Now you have given us good laws. If you let us write them—if we just had one-man legislature down here—we think we could write better ones, but the wisdom of our Founding Fathers said that we are going to have our checks and balances.

We don't always see everything alike. But you have given us good laws and we are going to do our best to give you good administration of those laws.



You don't know, really, how much satisfaction one in government gets. And you ought not to be in government if you don't want to serve humanity, if you don't want to do the greatest good for the greatest number. You ought to be somewhere else.

While this doesn't cover everything we would want to cover and we might have dotted an 'i' here and crossed a "t" there that you didn't, we nevertheless think that it is a great step forward. I am very proud to be associated with it. We will look back on it in the years to come and wonder, "How, oh how, did this Congress do this much before October?"

Thank you very much.

