

Liberal senators vote to change product safety bill

Joanna Smith Ottawa Bureau
Published On Tue Dec 15 2009

OTTAWA—The federal health minister is "outraged" that Liberal senators were able to get their way in changing a bill that would overhaul consumer product safety legislation in Canada.

The Conservative government has been trying to rework the consumer product safety regulatory framework for the past two years, but Liberal senators have been proposing amendments to Bill C-6, also known as the Canada Consumer Product Safety Act.

The senators voted Tuesday to accept amendments that would allow companies to have a stronger defence in fighting penalties for violating the rules and make it more difficult to get a warrant to search offices outside manufacturing facilities.

"I am outraged the Senate has amended our Consumer Product Safety Act. Liberal Senators are putting the health and safety of Canadian families at risk," Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq said in a statement following the vote Tuesday. "The Liberal Senators' amendments do nothing to help protect the health and safety of Canadians. Instead, they're attempting to introduce loopholes, administrative delays and an uneven playing field for industry, (which) has significantly limited our ability to prevent home-based businesses from putting dangerous products on the marketplace."

Liberal Sen. George Furey (Nfld.), who proposed some of the amendments last week, has said the changes would strengthen the bill because it was unconstitutional in its original form.

Furey said the language would make it possible for government inspectors to enter the home of anyone who bought a product deemed to be defective, even if the person had no plans to sell it