

STATE SENATOR • GRETCHEN WHITMER • 23RD DISTRICT

# Whitmer Press Release

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## **Senator Whitmer Plans Legislation to Ban Dangerous Novelty Lighters** *Toy-like lighters causing child injuries*

LANSING-State Senator Gretchen Whitmer (D-East Lansing) along with Fire Marshal Andy Neumann today announced legislation to ban the sale and distribution of dangerous toy-like or novelty lighters. Designed to look like toys, novelty lighters are causing serious injuries to children and home fire tragedies. Firefighters from around the state and concerned parents joined Whitmer at the event.

“Children are naturally curious, and these lighters made to look like a small camera or a small cell phone could be irresistible to an unknowing child,” said Whitmer. “Consumers- especially children-deserve to be protected from dangerous products like this.”

Stores throughout Michigan sell novelty lighters. Often parents as well as their children-mistake these lighters for actual toys. And there are incidents in Michigan and around the country of families mistaking these lighters as toys. Laura Fowler of Beaverton recently accidentally purchased what she thought was a toy rubber Dalmatian for her four-year-old daughter.

“I was terrified when I realized the rubber dog I bought for my daughter was a lighter,” said Ms. Fowler. “Even I thought it was a toy. There is no valid reason we should allow these dangerous items to be sold.”

In May of 2007, ten European countries voted to ban novelty lighters, and several state and city governments are working to ban their sale.

“It’s not enough to warn children of the dangers of these lighters,” said Andy Neumann, the Michigan State Fire Marshal. “This legislation is necessary to protect children from the serious consequences of unintentional misuse.”

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