

## **Michael R. Lemov**

**Chief Counsel, Investigations Subcommittee, House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee**

### **Initial Hearing on Consumer Product Safety Act**

Michael R. Lemov shares memories of a high profile committee hearing.

*Interview recorded February 22, 2012*

The first thing in the legislative process, obviously, is to set up hearings. My first hearing is illustrative of what I think was, was my concept, and maybe Moss' concept, of having interesting hearings. One product, subject to the potential Consumer Product Safety Act, was synthetic, athletic turf. Believe it or not, that's a household product, or a consumer product, because the definition in this, the proposed statute was any article used by a consumer, for the benefit of a consumer, or used by a consumer, or used around the home. Well, so there was an alternative ground of jurisdiction. So I decided and Moss approved, at first he approved everything I had suggested or did, but he reviewed it. Later on, he didn't review a lot. I mean he knew everything that was going on, but he gave me a lot of leeway to select people and things. This time, I talked to him about it. So our hearing was on the safety of synthetic football turf, and our first leadoff witness was Billy Kilmer, who was a quarterback for the Washington Redskins. We had Roy Jefferson, who I think was a wide receiver, a couple of New York Jets came down, every one of them, had had some problem with the turf, either they broke a leg, got an infection from the collected bacteria on the turf, or felt they were shortening their careers by the pounding of the hard surface. I don't know that the—that particular example of an unsafe product was representative of what the Consumer Product Safety commission has done in the 40 years since then, but it got eight cameras. Almost every member of the—every member of the subcommittee, and some full committee members who never came to subcommittee hearings later on, came by to say a few words before the cameras. I remember Bill Springer, the ranking Republican came by to see what the heck we were up to. It got a lot of attention, and it got the Consumer Product Safety Act off to a flying start.