

Families upset after government's backup camera mandate overdue

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Abigail Dahlen

WASHINGTON — Every year more than 200 people are killed and thousands injured when drivers back up.

For the most part, these deaths are not on the nation's highways, they are in the nation's driveways.

In 2008, Congress took action, but five years later, the action is stuck in neutral.

Brandy and Michael Dahlen's daughter Abigail should be turning 5 years old, but in 2010, a teenage neighbor accidentally backed over her when she chased a ball into his driveway.

The little girl died at the hospital.

Over time, the Dahlens have forgiven their neighbor, but their frustration with Washington is mounting.

In 2008, Congress passed a law requiring new cars to have rear-mounted video cameras. It gave the Transportation Department until 2011 to come up with a rule.

The technology is becoming more readily available. Once a driver puts the car in reverse, the camera image pops up on the center console, allowing them to see objects or small children that they may not have otherwise seen.

But the government's camera mandate is two years overdue.

So the Dahlens joined other families in D.C. this week to demand action.

"Every day of delay is outrageous, and we hope our message is heard today in Detroit and in the White House."

The Transportation Department declined an interview, but said it "remains committed to improving rearview visibility for the nation's automobiles," and said the rule remains under review.

Some car companies are taking it to the next level, where cars can apply the brakes even before the driver does.

For the Dahlens, cameras shouldn't be optional.

When asked if they think their daughter's death could have been avoided, Brandy Dahlen said, "Yes, Abigail would still be here."

The Dahlen's oldest son is also trying to educate the public. For an Eagle Scout project, he asked people to walk from the back of their cars, to measure the blind spots.

His mother said the size of the area shocked almost everyone.

At least 36 children in North and South Carolina have died in back over accidents since 1990.

<http://www.wsocv.com/news/news/local/families-upset-after-governments-backup-camera-man/nXKpR/>