



**Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety  
Center for Auto Safety  
Consumer Federation of America  
KidsAndCars.org**

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**Joint Statement: The Motor Vehicle Safety Title  
Advances Important Technology and Programs that will  
Save Lives, Reduce Injuries and Contain Crash Costs**

The House of Representatives Energy and Commerce Committee Majority today took decisive action in the public interest to provide consumers and roadway users with essential vehicle safety protections. The Committee's comprehensive package is urgently needed as the most recent estimates from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) show that 36,120 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes last year.

"There is no question that the Motor Vehicle Safety Title will protect all road users," said Cathy Chase, President of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates). "We applaud House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Consumer Protection and Commerce Subcommittee Chair Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) for their outstanding leadership. Congress should advance these important safety upgrades to deliver dramatic reductions in crashes, fatalities, injuries and associated costs." The Consumer Federation of America welcomes this legislation and looks forward to working with the Committee as we continue to review it over the coming days.

### **Advanced Driver Assistance Systems to Avoid Collisions**

Effective and available technologies such as automatic emergency braking (AEB), lane departure warning, and blind spot warning have been shown to reduce and mitigate crashes. However, these systems are not required as standard equipment in cars or subject to minimum performance requirements. “The Motor Vehicle Safety Title would finally mandate performance standards for an important suite of advanced safety technology and require it on all new cars and for all consumers, not just those who can afford luxury add-on features,” said Jason Levine, Executive Director of the Center for Auto Safety and Advocates’ Board of Directors member.

“The reason the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has recommended proven collision avoidance technologies is because they are a vital tool to increase auto safety, including combatting the frightening increase in pedestrian deaths. Combined with driver assist features aimed at limiting dangerous automation complacency and research into technology to assist first responders in saving lives more quickly after car crashes, this bill will improve the safety of all drivers, passengers, and pedestrians.” We commend the House Energy and Commerce Committee Majority for including this game-changing upgrade and thank Subcommittee Chair Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) for championing this issue with the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Smart Cars Act (H.R. 6284).

### **New Car Assessment Program to Bolster Consumer Information**

Over four decades ago, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) was the first nation to establish an auto safety consumer information program, the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP). This groundbreaking tool provides crash testing results and ratings and has since been emulated across the globe. Unfortunately, U.S. NCAP has not kept pace with new advanced technology and now seriously lags behind its international counterparts.

Former NHTSA Administrator and Advocates’ Board Member Joan Claybrook, who led the effort to create U.S. NCAP, said, “This program was designed to provide incentives for automakers to improve the safety of new cars and offer consumers important information about vehicle performance in crash tests. This essential information is already required on the price sticker in the showroom, but it now is seriously outdated. Last October, I co-authored a report with Advocates that outlined a blueprint for restoring U.S. NCAP to its original significance to better serve consumers. I applaud Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) and Subcommittee Chair Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) for incorporating necessary enhancements to U.S. NCAP in the Five-Stars for Safe Cars Act (H.R. 6256) and into the legislation released today.”

Jack Gillis, Executive Director of Consumer Federation of America, author of *The Car Book* and Advocates’ Board Member, was also integral to the creation of U.S. NCAP. “NHTSA must address the problem of ‘starflation,’” said Gillis. “Today’s NCAP does little to differentiate the performance of vehicles because many now get the same rating. This severely limits consumers’ ability to separate the lemons from the peaches. The revisions to U.S. NCAP outlined in the Motor Vehicle Safety Title will reinvigorate competition and significantly improve vehicle safety.”

### **Advanced Technology to Reduce Impaired Driving**

Drunk driving remains a leading killer on America's roads, with nearly one-third of all fatalities attributed to alcohol-impaired driving. Technology can be the key to preventing this scourge by equipping vehicles with systems that can detect impairment and provide alerts or even shut down a vehicle if necessary.

"This development holds the promise of dramatically reducing impaired driving, as well as possibly other dangerous driving behaviors such as distraction and drowsiness, which can be detected either through a number of different cues related to how a car is being driven or through sensors that can detect the presence of alcohol. As an emergency room nurse, I've experienced the devastating consequences of motor vehicle crashes which is why I wholeheartedly embrace any technology that can prevent tragedies before they happen," said Advocates' Consumer Vice Chair and former Emergency Nurses Association President Mary Jagim. Advocates thanks Representative Debbie Dingell (D-MI) for leading the charge on this innovative safety measure by introducing the Honoring Abbas Family Legacy to Terminate Drunk Driving ("HALT Drunk Driving") Act (H.R. 4354). We also recognize the tireless work of families of drunk driving victims to eliminate drunk driving.

### **Unattended Occupant Detection and Alert Systems to Prevent Hot Car Deaths**

In 2018 and 2019, over 100 children died as a result of being unknowingly left in a vehicle or accessing the vehicle independently and inadvertently trapping themselves inside. While typically associated with warmer months, this is a year-round problem afflicting loving, caring, responsible parents and caregivers. Fortunately, systems that can detect and warn of the presence of an occupant are available, affordable, and would be required in all new vehicles if the Motor Vehicle Safety Title is enacted. See [this video](#) to learn more about the systems.

"Each year innocent children are perishing needlessly in hot cars," said KidsAndCars.org President and Advocates' Board Member Janette Fennell. "Detection and alert technology provides a proven solution to this devastating deadly toll and should be built into all new cars. We know from years of experience that public education and industry promises are not enough. We thank Subcommittee Chair Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Reps. Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Peter King (R-NY) for introducing the Hot Cars Act (H.R. 3593) and to the Committee majority leadership for including this issue in the Motor Vehicle Safety Title."

### **Mitigating Against Risks of Keyless Ignition Technology**

Keyless ignition systems, also known as push-button starts, were installed as standard equipment on nearly two-thirds of vehicles sold in 2018 according to Edmunds. As this technology has become more prevalent, two potentially deadly safety risks have been identified: carbon monoxide poisoning and vehicle rollaway. Though offering convenience, the technology also makes it harder for people to notice that they have left their cars running, and without proper safeguards, this can have tragic consequences.

Susan Clark Livingston, whose parents died in their own home last May as their keyless ignition vehicle emitted exhaust fumes from the garage into the house said, “My parents, Dr. James Duane Livingston and Dr. Sherry Penney Livingston, could have been saved by an inexpensive and simple automatic shutoff feature. They died of carbon monoxide poisoning, but others have been crushed by vehicles accidentally left running in gear or in neutral after stepping out of their cars. Too many manufacturers have failed to address this safety defect. Subcommittee Chair Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) along with Reps. Darren Soto (D-FL), Seth Moulton (D-MA) and Joseph Kennedy III (D-MA) have introduced legislation, the Protecting Americans from the Risks of Keyless Ignition Technology (“PARK IT”) Act (H.R. 3145), that would address this hazard, and I am pleased to see it included in the Motor Vehicle Safety Title.”

### **Improving Limousine Safety**

Limousine rides are commonly associated with some of the most wonderful, memorable events in one’s life. Sadly, due to unacceptably weak standards, a crash involving a limousine can turn somebody’s happiest day into their worst nightmare. Legislation introduced by Reps. Paul Tonko (D-NY), Antonio Delgado (D-NY) and Elise Stefanik (R-NY) would implement a number of improvements recommended by the NTSB, closing loopholes that put passengers at serious risk. We commend the sponsors of H.R. 4708, the Safety, Accountability, and Federal Enforcement of Limos (“SAFE”) Limos Act, for their leadership on this issue.

Chase concluded, “Advocates has always championed proven safety systems and improved vehicle design. Since 1960, more than 600,000 lives have been saved by motor vehicle safety technology, as estimated by NHTSA in 2015. Enacting this measure will add to that remarkable track record and bring us closer to the ultimate goal of eliminating motor vehicle crashes, deaths and injuries.” Coupled with the laudable action taken yesterday by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the surface reauthorization package provides commonsense highway and auto safety advances. As the legislative process moves forward, Advocates looks forward to working with the Committee and providing input on this important legislation.

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**KidsAndCars.org**, a 501 (c)(3) national nonprofit is dedicated to saving the lives of children and pets in and around motor vehicles.

**Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety** is an alliance of consumer, medical, public health, law enforcement and safety consumers and insurance companies and agents working together to make America’s roads safer. Advocates’ mission is the adoption of federal and state laws, policies and programs that prevent motor vehicle crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs.