Car safety bill passed

A car safety bill named after a 2-year-old Woodbury boy who was killed when he was accidentally backed over by his father passed Congress yesterday.

The "Cameron Gulbransen Kids and Cars Safety Act of 2007" recommends that car manufacturers include several safety features such as motion detectors to alert drivers when an object is behind their vehicles.

The legislation calls for the U.S. Department of Transportation to issue standards that would require safety technologies to become standard equipment in all vehicles.

Cameron was killed in October 2002 when his dad, Dr. Greg Gulbransen, backed his BMW X5 sport utility vehicle over the boy, who was thought to be in the house asleep. Before shifting into reverse, the father said he checked the rearview and side mirrors and looked over his shoulder for any obstructions, and only then began to back out.

"Today's action represents the accumulation of hard work, dedication and commitment by everyone affected by these preventable tragedies," Gulbransen said in a statement. "When implemented, the provisions of the bill will make vehicles much safer for all American families."

The bill also requires that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration include power windows that automatically lower when they touch an object — another major cause of noncrash injuries to children. Already, some families have mounted small video cameras on their SUV trailer hitches to allow the driver to see behind the cars' bumpers.

In November 2005, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Rep. Peter King (R-Seaford) joined several Long Island families who had similar tragedies as the Gulbransens to announce sponsorship of the bill, which passed in the House in December.