

July 1, 2020

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao  
United States Secretary of Transportation  
Washington, DC

Dear Madame Secretary,

As family members who have suffered the loss or injury of our children in a hot car incident, we are reaching out to you with great concern. The inaction by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to advance effective and available technology to prevent hot car deaths and injuries is devastating. The price of inaction is the life of children and that is unacceptable.

Unfortunately, educational efforts over the last 20 years have not been effective. While public awareness of the issue is at an all-time high, so is the number of children dying. The last two years (2018, 2019) were the worst years in history for hot car deaths with over 100 little lives lost. These children do not have to die. Families do not have to live with the unbearable pain that we feel every day.

As you are aware, there have been significant advances in the development of technology to detect the presence of even a tiny newborn inside a vehicle. Last September, several of us traveled to Washington, DC to attend a demonstration held outside of the Senate Dirksen Office Building showcasing state-of-the-art child detection systems. Additionally, we met with many Congressional offices who were also impressed with the current technology.

The USDOT has the authority and ability to issue a safety standard to require occupant detection systems as standard equipment in all new passenger vehicles as would be required by language in the Moving Forward Act (H.R. 2). The provision in H.R. 2 directs the USDOT to issue a safety standard within two years that would require every new car be equipped with technology that both detects the presence of an occupant in a vehicle and provides a warning to individuals inside and outside of the vehicle about the presence of an occupant.

It is important to note that the European NCAP will be rewarding manufacturers for offering 'Child Presence Detection' systems as standard equipment starting in 2022.

**Child Presence Detection (2022)**

Leaving an unattended child in a parked car, even for a few minutes, can cause heat-stroke and death. Child deaths from vehicle-related heat-stroke happen less frequently than those resulting from crashes, but the nature of these entirely avoidable deaths deserves special attention.

A child's inability to exit the vehicle on his/her, own combined with a low tolerance for high temperatures, requires that children never be left unattended in a car. Technological solutions are available that can monitor

a child's presence in the vehicle and alert the car owner or emergency services should the situation become dangerous. Euro NCAP will reward manufacturers that offer such solutions as standard.

Education alone is ineffective, but safety standards are effective. Similar to how the dangerous issue of rear visibility was solved with a safety standard requiring rearview cameras in all new cars, detection technology would save countless lives and prevent even more injuries of very young children. It is unfathomable for the USDOT to continue to spend millions of dollars year after year on educational efforts without doing anything to advance technological solutions that would create real change.

We strongly urge you to take immediate action to issue a safety standard for child detection systems in all vehicles. Every day that this technology is not utilized, America's children are at risk.

On a different note, we were extremely disappointed that the USDOT did not include any victim's family members voices in the press event or any efforts involved during National Heatstroke Prevention Day. It is an insensitive omission to not include those who have been affected by this issue. It would be unimaginable for the USDOT to organize a press event and panel discussion on drunk driving or any other topic that did not include victims or survivors. We certainly hope you will want to consider inviting us so our voices can be heard in the future.

We come to you with great urgency about a desperately needed technological solution that will solve the problem. Last week another child died in a hot car in Virginia. Every day that we delay in advancing these life-saving detection technologies means children are at risk of needlessly dying. Please do not let another summer pass without making the obvious and needed technology a part of the solution for America's children.

Respectfully,

Andrew & Jamie Dill  
Parents of Oliver who died in a hot car  
Princeton, IN

Tania San Miguel-Bounds  
Mother of Miah who died in a hot car  
Olalla, WA

Juan & Marissa Rodriguez

Parents of Luna & Phoenix who died in a hot car  
New City, NY

Lisa Berry  
Mother of Lexi who died in a hot car  
Huntsville, AL

Stephanie & Corey Mitchell  
Parents of Tate who died in a hot car  
St. Louis, MO

Jenny & Mike Stanley  
Parents of Sydney who died in a hot car  
Alpharetta, GA

Eric & Michelle Stuyvesant  
Parents of Michael who was severely injured in a hot car incident  
Garland, TX

Ashley & Judge Wade Naramore  
Parents of Thomas Naramore who died in a hot car  
Hot Springs, AR

Sue Boe Shea  
Grandmother of Kate who died in a hot car  
Land O Lakes, FL

Stephanie & Israel Pinon  
Parents of Jahzel who died in a hot car  
Albuquerque, NM

Norman II & Catherine Collins  
Parents of Norman Bishop who died in a hot car  
Jackson, MS

Loren Beltran  
Mother of Joziah who died in a hot car  
Mexico Beach, FL  
Las Vegas, NV

Erin Johnson  
Mother of Bridget who died in a hot car  
Rockwell, NC

Brittany Borgess  
Mother of Samaria who died in a hot car  
Williamsport, PA

Marta Magellan  
Grandmother of Samuel who died in a hot car  
Miami, FL

Jodie Edwards  
Mother of Jenna who died in a hot car  
Liberty Township, OH

Kristin Whitaker  
Mother of Lawson who died in a hot car  
Palm Harbor, FL

Angela and Scott Jones  
Parents of Charlotte who died in a hot car  
Gilbert, AZ

Keegan Jones  
Aunt of Charlotte who died in a hot car  
Gilbert, AZ

Megan Hall  
Mother of Lillian Kathryn who died in a hot car  
League City, TX

Dikeisha Whitlock-Pryer & Raymond Pryer Sr.  
Parents of RJ who died in a hot car  
Houston, TX

Vanessa & Michael Goolsby  
Parents of Micayla who died in a hot car  
Hialeah, FL

Mikey & Michelle Terry  
Parents of Mika who died in a hot car  
Grandview, TX

Dawn & Wes Peabody  
Parents of Maya who died in a hot car  
Phoenix, AZ

Zhong & Pearla Li  
Father of Kiara who died in a hot car  
Pomona, CA

Leanna Simmons  
Mother of Cooper who died in a hot car  
Sheffield, AL

Delyla Blackburn  
Mother of Addyson who died in a hot car  
Shreveport, LA

Todd and Melody Costello  
Parents of Tyler who died in a hot car  
Medina, OH

Andrew & Karey Ann Dawidowicz  
Parents of child who survived a hot car near miss  
Denton, MD

Erin Holley  
Mother of Finn who survived a hot car near miss  
Charleston, SC

Brenda Nesselroad Slaby  
Mother of Cecilia who died in a hot car  
Loveland, OH

Carol Axmann-Harrison & Miles Harrison  
Parents of Chase who died in a hot car  
Purcellville, VA

Deona Bien, RN & Jesse Bien  
Mother of Aslyn who died in a hot car  
Tucson, AZ  
Honolulu, Hawaii

Richie Gray  
Father of Sophia who died in a hot car  
Hartsville, SC

Stephanie Salvilla  
Mother of Gannon who died in a hot car  
Orlando, FL

Ashley Phillips  
Mother of infant who survived a hot car near miss  
Kaufman, TX

Amber Rollins  
Mother of Renly who survived a hot car near miss  
Olathe, KS

Dalyce Franz  
Mother of Seth who died in a hot car  
Las Vegas, NV

Gilbert Estevez & Sulaine Rosario  
Parents of Rosalie who died in a hot car  
Leonardtown, MD

Deannie & Leland Jacobson  
Parents of Luke who died in a hot car  
Sugar Land, TX

Lindsey Rogers-Seitz & Kyle Seitz  
Parents of Benjamin who died in a hot car  
Cary, NC  
Ridgefield, CT

Lizz Maxwell  
Witness to a hot car death

Medina, OH

Dee Dee Estis

Mother of Christian who died in a hot car

Texas

Nicole Engler, RN & Pete Engler

Parents of Remi who died in a hot car

Roseburg, OR

Beth & Kyle Brown

Parents of Amberlee who died in a hot car

Chandler, AZ

Dr. John Moschello & Judie Galvin

Family friends of Luna and Phoenix Rodriguez who died in a hot car

Watertown, CT

Raelyn Balfour

Parent of Bryce who died in a hot car

Earlysville, VA

Dr. Dennis Sierra

Father of Andres who died in a hot car

Boca Raton, FL

Emily Bird

Mother of Eli who died in a hot car

Fort Lauderdale, FL

Conni Lowe

Grandmother of Holland Judy

Lexington, KY

Kristina Wilcoxson

Mother whose 3-month-old son survived in a hot car

Noble, OK

Joy Green

Mother of Angel who died in a hot car

Baton Rouge, LA

Reggie McKinnon  
Father of Payton  
Fort Meyers, FL

Raychele Jackson  
Mother of River who died in a hot car  
Roanoke, VA

Alan & Carla Lyon  
Parents of Sophia who died in a hot car  
Dolgeville, NY

Douglas W & Diana Grote  
Parents of Kristen who died in a hot car  
Moore, SC

Christine Hladky  
EMT who responded to a hot car death  
Cape Carteret, NC

Brian Lynch  
Firefighter/paramedic who responded to a hot car death  
Maryland