

Safety groups sue USDOT over rearview cameras

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Demanding no more delays, safety groups and two parents are suing the United States Department of Transportation for failing to issue an auto safety rule mandated by Congress in 2008. That's the year Congress enacted the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act, which requires the DOT to issue a rule to improve rear visibility in all new cars through backup cameras or other means.

"We're absolutely impatient," said Amber Rollins with the Kansas City-based group Kids and Cars. "I mean, children are dying every single day and being horribly injured and they know that and they're continuing to delay the safety technology that we know prevents these tragedies."

Rollins said the DOT was supposed to implement the rule by 2011 but has just delayed it again until 2015. Each year the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says more than 200 individuals are killed and 18,000 injured in "backover" crashes.

Marissa Garza, 14, of Overland Park, Kan., was in first grade when her dad accidentally backed over her 9 years ago and broke her ankle.

"I screamed bloody murder because it was terrifying," she said. Garza said when her dad bought a new Ford Truck in 2008, he made sure to buy a truck with rearview camera technology.

Casey Jordan of Hanesville, Kan., told FOX 4 her daughter suffered a horrific eye injury after her husband accidentally backed over her last year when she was just 18 months old.

"She had a five percent chance of living. They life-flighted her to Children's Mercy in Kansas City," Jordan said. She's furious that a law passed in 2008 still hadn't been implemented in 2012 when her daughter was nearly killed. "Every day that passes there are more of these tragic accidents happening."

On Tuesday the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration recommended that auto makers add rearview camera systems to all new cars, but the DOT doesn't want the rule mandated until 2015. Safety advocates who are suing say that's too long.

"When Congress ordered this rule issued in three years, they meant three years, not seven," Scott Michelman, attorney for Public Citizen, said. "It's time for a court to step in and make the Transportation Department issue the rule."

Plaintiffs are asking the court to force the DOT to issue the rule within 90 days.

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