

# Rearview nightmare

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Every parent with a stair-step brood to keep track of 24/7 knows this scenario all too well. It's the hectic time between the school bell and the dinner bell. The 12-year-old twins are at their desks finishing homework and the toddler is in the middle of things with her older sibs, the way she always is. At least, that's what you assume.

The cell rings and it's your oldest, asking for a ride home from soccer practice. You holler up to the twins that you'll be back in a flash, grab the keys to the SUV and back out of the garage hoping that the casserole doesn't burn while you're on the errand. As you ease down the driveway, the fateful moment arrives: an unexpected bump under the left rear wheel.

Must be a toy someone left in the drive, you think, as you open the driver's seat door to investigate. What you come upon is the unthinkable - your darling toddler crushed, bleeding and maybe lifeless.

We cannot fathom a more heartbreaking tragedy for parents and a family to endure than the loss of a child in such a brutal, senseless manner.

And we certainly cannot fathom that implementing a federal law to increase visibility behind vehicles has been repeatedly delayed. The Obama administration has now postponed until 2015 implementation of the law signed by President [George W. Bush](#) in 2008. More young lives will be lost; thousands more are likely to be injured or maimed as a result of this baffling decision.

On Wednesday, a group of grieving parents finally had enough. Led by the consumer group [Public Citizen](#), they filed a federal lawsuit in New York state asking a court of appeals to declare that the [Department of Transportation](#) has unreasonably delayed the rule and to direct the department and its secretary, [Anthony Foxx](#), to issue the rule within 90 days.

Each week across the nation, children are injured or killed when parents accidentally back their cars over them on their way out of the driveway.

As told compellingly by reporter [Susan Carroll](#) ("How can this happen?," Page A1, Sunday) the answer to that headline question is that it does happen - and all too often.

The pain and guilt left by each of these tragedies is a burden parents must come to terms with, each in their own way. As Carroll's narrative tells us, this can be an excruciating ordeal.

For Kingwood residents Olinda and [John Woodruff](#), the loss of their daughter Rebecca, 4, was world-shattering, especially for Olinda, who had backed over Rebecca with a 5,000-pound Expedition.

The Woodruffs have courageously shared their story with Chronicle readers, including Olinda's nightmarish trips to the spot on the driveway where the accident occurred to grieve for her daughter and blame herself.

Blessedly, that cloud of sorrow appears to be lifting slowly for the Woodruffs with time and support from family, church family, friends and counseling. We join the many who pray for their continuing recovery and healing.

As Carroll's story showed, the Woodruffs' painful questions resonated with a New York pediatrician, [Gary Gulbransen](#), and for equally personal reasons. Gulbransen had accidentally killed his own son, Cameron, with a BMW SUV in 2002.

It still wounds to retell the story, but the pediatrician does so regularly to promote legislation called Cameron's law.

Passed and signed into law by President Bush in 2008, the law was supposed to improve rear-end visibility in vehicles, but the details were left to be negotiated.

And so, five years and scores of injuries and deaths later, the problem remains unaddressed. This delay, and the sorrow-filled impact it has had on thousands of American families, borders on criminal.

Those now a bit long in the tooth may remember the fight over seat belts in the 1950s. It was won and lives were saved. A few years later, airbags came along. More lives were saved.

Using technology to protect literally hundreds of young (and not so young) lives would seem a simple matter. We hope the parents prevail in their lawsuit.

<http://www.chron.com/opinion/editorials/article/Rearview-nightmare-4847424.php>