

Pelham family visits Washington, D.C. to tout backup cameras

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Two Pelham parents whose daughter was killed in a 2010 accident in Helena were among parents from across the country who visited Capital Hill on April 11 to tout backup cameras on vehicles.

Brandy and Michael Dahlen joined several other parents and U.S. Reps Peter King, R-New York, and Jan Schakowsky, D-Illinois, at a press event in Washington, D.C. During the event, the Dahlens and the other parents who have lost loved ones to vehicle-related back-over accidents urged national leaders to enact a rear vehicle visibility rule outlined in the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act, which was signed into law in 2008.

The rule requires the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to “expand the driver’s rearward field of view in order to allow drivers to detect pedestrians who are in, or who may be entering the area behind the vehicle and avoid striking them” by requiring devices such as vehicle backup cameras on all new cars, according to information on Kidsandcars.org.

The rule was originally scheduled to go into effect in February 2011, but has not yet been issued, according to the website.

The Dahlen family has been advocating vehicle backup cameras since their daughter, Abigail, died in April 2010 after she was struck by a vehicle backing out of a neighbor’s driveway in Helena.

The Dahlens’ visit to Washington came about a month after Abigail’s brother, Nathan, hosted a vehicle safety seminar at the Pelham YMCA. During the event, Nathan Dahlen gave demonstrations to show drivers the potential dangers of blind spots, which can extend as far as 50 feet behind vehicles.

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