

Statement by Laura Beck

Mother of Anderson Beck and wife of Aaron Beck who both died on June, 28, 2022

Richmond, VA

Press Conference: Grieving Families, Members of Congress, Kids and Car Safety and Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety Call for Immediate Action to End Hot Car Tragedies

May 1, 2023

My name is Laura Beck, I am from Richmond, Virginia and my son, Anderson, passed away due to a hot car death last year on June 28th. Not only did I lose my 18-month-old that morning, but I lost my husband, Aaron, as well due to suicide after he found our son in the back of his car.

I would like to briefly tell you a little about my husband and son. Who they are to me, our family, our friends, ... I want everyone to know how important and special they are and will continue to be. The impact that they both made on this world is nothing short of extraordinary and I hope that by sharing a little about them, **it will open the eyes of many people that truly believe this could never happen to them.**



Aaron was so fascinating. He was hilarious, intelligent... I never met anyone in my life that was so passionate to learn new things and graciously share his experiences. He would be so excited about something that it just made you feel intrigued, pulling you in and making you want to know more. He taught with so much patience. His laugh was infectious. He was authentic and kind. He was selfless and so full of love but among all of his qualities, his best was being a father to our son.

When we had Anderson, we would just stare at him while we held him, wondering how we made such a beautiful, tiny little human. He was perfect. Every single inch and ounce of him. Every day for those 18 precious months of his life, we doted on our baby boy. Aaron was so proud to be a papa to Anderson and watching them play and bond was truly magical. We'd spend hours outside playing, taking walks, pulling Anderson in his red wagon down the street. He loved being pushed in his swing under the huge tree in our front yard.

Now, I stare at the pictures and the videos I took of our family and wonder how we got here. Hours prior we were a family of 3, laughing, singing songs, and eating breakfast. **In the matter of hours, all of that laughing stopped. The singing stopped. Everything just abruptly stopped.**

The day Anderson died; my husband was supposed to take him to daycare. His morning routine was derailed when he had to run back inside to grab his cell phone. He then returned to his car alone, got in and drove straight to work. Anderson had been sick and missed the previous day at daycare, so our routine had been just slightly off that Tuesday morning. Hours into the day, I sent my son's daycare a message asking how he felt that morning, since he was coming back after being sick. Hearing those words that my child did not show up today made me ill. Asking for her to repeat herself and having to listen to her walk down the hallway and check his classroom just for it to be confirmed he wasn't there was the longest couple of minutes of my life.

I immediately called Aaron and asked where Anderson was. He was so confused and had no idea what I was talking about. I rushed to his work, talking to 911, traveling down the highway with my emergency lights on and passing people to get to wherever my baby was. By the time I got there, police had shown up but Aaron had already left with Anderson. We did not know where he had gone. We soon found out that he had driven home and took his own life in the woods behind our home. Our beautiful home was our little slice of heaven where we were supposed to watch our sweet boy grow into a wonderful man, just like his Papa.

There is such a stigma behind these types of tragedies. **I am here to tell you that this DOES happen to amazing parents.** Aaron was one of them. Anderson was our entire world.

I went from being that naive, close-minded, and clueless person that said "That would never happen to me. How could anyone forget their child in the car?" to a grieving widow, suffering immensely from the heartache of losing my baby boy and my husband all in one day.

Occupant detection and alert technology exists and is readily available to install in ALL vehicles. This technology would have saved my son's life. It would have also saved my husband's life. **WHY isn't this already in every single vehicle? WHY do we have to wait for more lives to be destroyed before action is taken? We can't keep delaying this life-saving provision.**

I don't want to be here today, but here I am. I don't want any other parent to have to stand in my shoes. I will live the rest of my life in Aarons and Anderson's honor, fighting until no more babies are lost in this way.

I am here today to ask that the leaders at the Department of Transportation HEAR MY STORY. **Babies do not have to die in hot cars – the solution is in your hands.** YOU CAN PROTECT THEM. The hot car provision needs to move forward immediately. **And, automakers don't have to wait, they can install these effective detection systems today and they should. Please do the right thing and help us keep our babies safe.**

Thank you.