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Contact:

Clinton Press Office 202-224-2243 or
press@clinton.senate.gov

CLINTON AND DINGELL HAIL FINAL PASSAGE OF KIDS AND CARS SAFETY LEGISLATION NOW ON ITS WAY TO BE SIGNED INTO LAW

Clinton and Dingell Led Bipartisan Effort to Pass Landmark Legislation

WASHINGTON, DC – Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) and Congressman John Dingell (D-MI), chairman of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, today hailed final Congressional approval of the Cameron Gulbransen Kids and Cars Safety Act, their legislation to protect children from injury in and around motor vehicles. Nearly every other day in the United States, a child dies in a non-traffic vehicle accident. Senator Clinton and Chairman Dingell’s legislation ensures that cars in the United States are properly equipped with safety technology to prevent unintentional harm to children, promising safer cars and safer children across the country. Having been approved by both chambers of Congress, the bill now goes to the President’s desk to be signed into law.

“Today marks a long-awaited victory for children, families and safety advocates and provides a real step forward for children’s safety. I am honored to have championed the Cameron Gulbransen Kids and Cars Safety Act in the Senate, named in remembrance of a two-year-old Long Island boy who was killed when he wandered behind the SUV his father was backing into their driveway. With this legislation we honor his memory, and the memory of all children taken from us by these tragic and preventable auto accidents,” Senator Clinton said. “I want to thank all my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who joined me in supporting this important measure, especially Chairman John Dingell who was instrumental in helping this bill achieve passage in the House. Together we have shown that by working hard and finding common ground, we can produce legislation that will make a real difference in the lives of Americans. I urge the President to quickly sign this bill into law and help make all our children safer.”

"This legislation represents a critical step in protecting motor vehicle passengers, particularly young children. With the President's support, we can strengthen safety requirements and help families avoid the tragedy of preventable injuries and deaths," said Chairman Dingell. "I commend the outstanding work of my colleagues and am especially grateful for the leadership provided by Representative Schakowsky and Senator Clinton. Together, Congressional leaders have taken action to protect America's families and kids. Now I urge the President to join in this effort and sign this legislation into law."

On average, a child dies in the United States nearly every other day from a non-traffic incident — backed-over by a driver who couldn't see behind his or her vehicle, strangled in a power window, or killed when an

automobile inadvertently shifts into gear. The average age of victims is between 12 and 23 months. In 70 percent of cases, a parent, relative or close friend is behind the wheel. According to the child safety group Kids and Cars, there were more than 230 non-traffic fatalities in 2007 -- the highest number of fatalities ever recorded. The technology exists to protect families and children from these tragedies at relatively low cost. However, such technology is only available on a select few high-end vehicles or as an aftermarket product that consumers have to purchase and have installed.

The Cameron Gulbransen Kids and Cars Safety Act would require common sense child safety protections in all new vehicles. First, it requires the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to begin a rulemaking on the need to require power windows and panels to automatically reverse direction if there is an obstruction in the path of a motor vehicle window or panel, thereby preventing children from being trapped, hurt, or even killed by power windows in cars. Second, it requires a back-over detection standard that will alert drivers to the presence of a child behind the vehicle. Every vehicle without back-over prevention technology -- technology that exists today at relatively low-cost -- has a blind spot. Some are more than 50 feet long according to testing by Consumer Reports. Third, it requires that in all key positions the vehicle service brake be engaged in order to shift out of "Park." This will stop anyone not intending to drive the car, such as a child, from engaging the transmission and prevent the vehicle from inadvertently rolling away. The legislation also establishes a database on injuries and deaths in non-traffic, non-crash events and a child safety information program to disseminate information to parents about these hazards and ways to mitigate them.

In October of 2005, Senator Clinton first introduced the Cameron Gulbransen Kids and Cars Safety Act in the Senate. Senator Clinton worked for years to build bipartisan support for the measure, meeting frequently with child safety advocates and families who have lost children, and working closely with Chairman Dingell and a bipartisan coalition to draw attention to this important issue.

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