



## **Consumer, Safety Groups Applaud Important Child-Car Safety Measures Approved in Today's Highway Bill**

### **Power window, backovers, data collection addressed in omnibus bill**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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(Washington, D.C.) Consumer and child safety groups praised today's passage of important auto child-safety measures in the omnibus transportation bill, H.R. 3, including outlawing dangerous power window switches and studying methods to prevent backover deaths behind vehicles.

By approving these measures, Congress is taking important steps to put an end to the senseless loss of life of our children in preventable auto incidents, said Sally Greenberg, senior product safety counsel for Consumers Union.

We are incredibly grateful that Congress worked in a bipartisan manner to ensure the safety of our precious children, said Janette E. Fennell, founder and president of the national nonprofit child safety organization, KIDS AND CARS. Today's announcement is an incredible victory for child safety and the entire country.

Car safety advocates and consumer groups have long lobbied Congress to improve the safety of children in and around cars. Each year, hundreds of children lose their lives in preventable incidents, such as being backed over due to vehicle blind zones, or strangled in a power window. Provisions in the bill addressing these concerns include;

- Requires power window switches in autos that must be pulled up or out as opposed to rocker or toggle switches to prevent accidental strangulation.
- Requires the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) to study methods for reducing backovers, analyze prevention technology, and provide an estimate of cost savings that would result from widespread use of backover prevention devices
- Requires NHTSA to gather nontraffic, noncrash incident data. Many incidents involving children happen in the family driveway or parking lots on private property and are not currently counted by the federal government.

Now that the government will begin collecting data about nontraffic, noncrash incidents, they will learn that these tragedies are not only predictable, but very preventable, Fennell said. Our data shows that this is a significant cause of death and injury; yet we know our database is only the tip of the iceberg.

In addition, the legislation addresses many other safety concerns including stronger standards for roof crush resistance and side-impacts, providing point-of-purchase safety information (Stars on Cars) for consumers, and

establishing rollover prevention measures. The bill also makes seat belt reminders more effective and strengthens standards to prevent people from being ejected from their cars.

This bill includes important measures to minimize the dangers to adults and children in and around cars, and begins looking at solutions to prevent these tragedies, Greenberg said. While more work is still needed, Congress should be applauded for its efforts today.

Union and KIDS AND CARS praised members of Congress for their tenacity to include safety provisions in the bill. The strong leadership throughout the year and in the conference of Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-HI), Rep. Joe Barton (R-TX), Rep. John Dingell (D-MI), Rep. Charles Chip Pickering (R-MS); and Rep. Jim Oberstar (D-MN), will save thousands of lives and prevent millions of injuries due to motor vehicle crashes.

In addition to the H.R. 3 conferees, key leaders such as Senators Mike DeWine (R-OH) and Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) in the Senate, and Representatives on the House Energy and Commerce Committee Ð Mary Bono (R-CA), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Ed Towns (D-NY) and Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) Ð played important roles in advancing the safety provisions and ensuring they were included in the final bill.