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KIDS AND CARS * Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety * Consumers Union * Public Citizen * Center for Auto Safety * Trauma Foundation * Consumer Federation of America * National Consumers League

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Tuesday, December 18, 2007

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Parents, Consumer and Safety Groups Applaud House Committee Action Today for Passing the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Act

Child Safety Bill Sponsored by Representatives Schakowsky (D-IL) and King (R-NY) Clears House Committee Hurdle

Washington, DC — Parents, consumer and safety groups applaud the House Energy and Commerce Committee's unanimous vote today in passing H.R. 1216, an important child auto safety measure.

The bill, the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Act of 2007, was named after 2-year-old Cameron, who was killed when he was inadvertently backed over by an SUV because the blindzone behind the vehicle made it impossible to see him. Dr. Greg Gulbransen, a Long Island pediatrician expressed gratitude that the bill was moving forward. "Today's action represents the accumulation of hard work, dedication and commitment by everyone affected by these preventable tragedies. When implemented, the provisions of the bill will make vehicles much safer for all American families" said Dr. Gulbransen.

"The Committee took a very positive step today and we appreciate the leadership of Representatives Schakowsky and King who sponsored the bill with 42 other Democratic and Republican Members of Congress," said Janette Fennell, president of KIDS AND CARS. "We call on Congress to make the safety of our children and passage of H.R. 1216 a priority before the end of the year. This bill will help prevent other tragedies like the one that took Cameron's life and the thousands of serious injuries that happen to children every year" she added.

The legislation addresses three of the most serious causes of preventable injuries and fatalities to young children in and around motor vehicles: getting caught in an automatically closing power window; being struck by a backing vehicle because of an unacceptable blindzone; and placing a vehicle in gear that results in an uncontrolled roll away without having to depress the brake.

"We know what the problems are, we have inexpensive and effective technological solutions available and now we have a bill with deadlines for federal government action", commented Jackie Gillan, vice president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety.

“The House Energy and Commerce Committee took a major step in moving this legislation forward. It is now up to the full House to move quickly to adopt the measure and send it to the Senate,” said Ellen Bloom of Consumers Union.

The legislation directs the U.S. Department of Transportation to issue new safety standards within specific time periods that will lead to the installation of safety technologies as standard equipment in all vehicles to prevent deaths and injuries in and around motor vehicles. These safety technologies are already available as standard equipment, upgrades or optional equipment in many makes and models of vehicles. The bill also requires the department to establish a database of noncrash incidents and develop a program to provide the public with safety information regarding nontraffic dangers to young children.

Since 2000, over 1,350 children have died in non-traffic incidents, with at least 227 fatalities already in 2007 according to KIDS AND CARS. Back-over incidents have increased dramatically claiming the lives of 474 children from 2002-2006 compared to 128 from 1997-2001. Backovers now account for half of all non-traffic fatalities involving children. The federal government does not collect data about non-traffic incidents, so the actual fatality numbers are likely much higher.

A 2002 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that over 9,100 children are treated in hospital emergency rooms (176 per week) due to non-traffic incidents in a one-year time period. Some of the deadliest months for children killed in noncrash incidents occurred in 2007. In July, 2007 alone, 34 children died in nontraffic incidents, followed by 31 fatalities in August and 26 fatalities in April.

Joan Claybrook, president, Public Citizen and former Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration responded to the Committee’s action, “Chairman Dingell and Ranking Member Barton are to be commended for moving this legislation. We urge the bill to be passed by the House and Senate before Congress recesses. We can’t afford to wait any longer for this essential protection for children.”

The following relatives of children who were injured or died in preventable nontraffic auto incidents along with many others have joined the safety and consumer groups in support of the Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Safety Act of 2007:

Dr. & Mrs. Greg Gulbransen, in memory of son, Cameron, age 2, who was backed over and killed on October 19, 2002 (Oyster Bay, NY)

Bill & Adriann Nelson, in memory of son, Alec, 16 months, who was backed over and killed on April 24, 2004. (Dix Hills, NY)

Packy & Brenda Campbell, in memory of son, Ian Joseph, 22 months, who died when a vehicle was inadvertently knocked into gear on April 14, 2004 (Farmington, NH)

Mrs. Susan Auriemma, in honor of daughter, Kate age 3 1/2, who was backed over and injured on May 27, 2005 (Manhasset, NY)

Britt & Jay Gates, in memory of daughter, Zoie Beth Gates, age 2 1/2, who was killed by a power window on November 3, 2001 (Anthony, KS)

Ms. Melissa Feimer, in memory of her niece, Vada Schoon, age 3, who was backed over and killed on June 7, 2006 (Maywood, NJ)

Steve & Shannon Campbell, in memory of son, Drew Campbell, 26 months, who was backed over and killed on April 20, 2003 (Cincinnati, OH)

Michael & Sharron DiMario, in memory of son, Gino J. DiMario, age 7, who was backed over and killed on February 19, 2005. (Cincinnati, OH)

Orin & Arden Rosenfeld, in memory of daughter, Veronica Rosenfeld, age 2, who was backed over and killed on March 27, 2005 (Boca Raton, FL)

Mark & Keiko Warschauer, in memory of son, Michael Warschauer, 10 months, who died after being inadvertently left in a hot car on August 8, 2003 (Irvine, CA)

Smith & Julie Peck, in memory of son, Jackson Peck, age 4, who was backed over and killed on December 23, 2004 (Marietta, GA)

Ms. Amie Duemer, in memory of son, Josef Duemer, age 1, who died after being inadvertently left in a hot car on August 3, 2005 (Lubbock, TX)

Tim & Angela Gridley, in memory of daughter, Aliviah Faith Gridley, 26 months, who was backed over and killed on December 30, 2005 (Cedartown, GA)

Travis & Sally Knoll, in memory of son, Davin Knoll, age 4, who was strangled in a power window on June 2, 2004 (Sheboygan, WI)

Phil & Cheryl Bransom, in memory of son, Douglas Bransom, age 7, who was struck and killed by an SUV on May 30, 2006 (West Linn, OR)

Todd & Melody Costello, in memory of son, Tyler Costello, 8 months, who died after being inadvertently let in a hot vehicle on July 29, 2002 (Medina, OH)

Kevin & Bethany Falkner, in memory of son, Steven Matthew Falkner, age 3, who was killed by a power window on January 7, 1998 (West Plains, MO)

Ms. Lisa Rice, in memory of son, Craig Rice, age 5, who was backed over and killed on July 13, 2003, (Sacramento, CA)

Aaron Chatten, in memory of daughter, Madison Faith Chatten, 15 months, who was backed over and killed on May 3, 2005 (Glasgow, MT)

Bob & AnnMarie Pszybylski, in honor of son, Robert Pszybylski, age 2, who was critically injured when struck by a vehicle on April 7, 2006 (St. James, NY)

Rodney & Meredyth Bryant, in memory of daughter, Annabelle Riley Bryant, age 2 1/2, who was killed after being backed over on May 4, 2005 (Glen Allen, VA)

Matthew & Lisa Cavallaro, in memory of daughter, Agatha, age 2 who was backed over on Father's Day, June 20, 2004 (Muttontown, NY)

Roger & Jennifer Motzkus, in memory of daughter, Jessica, 18 months, who was backed over by her Uncle's van and killed on June 12, 2004. (Salt Lake City, UT)

Alicia Lopez, in memory of daughter, Mariana 18 months, who was backed over and killed by her Aunt on May 14, 2007. (Covington, WA)

Paul & Dj Zweigle, in memory of daughter, Lynnea Joy Zweigle, age 21 months, who was killed after being backed over on November 8, 2005 (Delta, CO)

Michele & Mikey Terry, in memory of daughter, Mika Terry, age 6 months, who was who died after being inadvertently left in a hot truck on June 23, 2004 (Maypearl, CA)