



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
AND AUTO SAFETY



**KidsAndCars.org * Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety * Consumers Union *
Public Citizen * Center for Auto Safety * Trauma Foundation * Consumer
Federation of America * National Consumers League ***

NEWS RELEASE

KidsAndCars.org

<http://www.kidsandcars.org/>

Contact:

Janette Fennell, 415-336-9279 or Janette@KidsAndCars.org

Safe Guards Protecting Children in and Around Vehicles Becomes Law; *Consumer and Safety Groups Applaud Congress, President*

February 29, 2008, Washington, DC — Parents, consumer and safety groups applaud the U.S. Congress and the President for passing a law helping to protect children in and around motor vehicles. The Cameron Gulbransen Kids Transportation Act, signed by the President yesterday, addresses three 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. The U.S. House had passed the legislation in December and the Senate on February 14, 2008..

The law was named after 2-year-old Cameron Gulbransen 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 signed into law. “Yesterday’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.

“Yesterday’s signing of this bi-partisan legislation demonstrates that Congress recognizes that children’s safety should not be an option or an upgrade. The adoption of a few simple safety measures will help us reduce many preventable injuries and fatalities in and around vehicles,” said Janette Fennell, president of KidsAndCars.org.

The groups praised the members of Congress who diligently sought passage of this measure for several years. “We applaud the leadership of Representatives Schakowsky and King and Senators Clinton and Sununu for their perseverance in bringing us to this historic moment,” said Jackie Gillan, vice president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. “This bill will help us avoid other tragedies like the one that took Cameron’s life and prevent the thousands of serious injuries to children every year because of large blindzones behind vehicles and dangerous power windows,” she added.

Since 2000, over 1,375 children have died in non-traffic incidents, with over 230 fatalities documented in 2007 according to KidsAndCars.org. 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.

"Technology exists to solve the problems involving blindzones, power windows, and cars that slip out of gear. Now that we have a law in place the government will be compelled to take action on these issues and save the lives of children. We urge the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to begin their rule making process quickly," 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 non-crash incidents and develop a program to provide the public with safety information regarding non-traffic dangers to young children.

Joan Claybrook, president, Public Citizen and former Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, responded to the Committee's action, "The House and Senate are to be commended for approving this legislation. 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 and worked toward passage 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 3.5, who was backed over and injured on May 27, 2005 (Manhasset, NY)
- Britt Gates, in memory of daughter, Zoie Beth Gates, age 2.5, 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 (Cliffside Park, 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 left 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 Pszybyski, in honor of son, Robert Pszybyski, 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 2.5, 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)

#

About KidsAndCars.org: Founded in 1996, KidsAndCars.org is a national nonprofit child safety organization dedicated to preventing injuries and deaths of children in and around motor vehicles. KidsAndCars.org promotes awareness among parents, caregivers and the general public about the dangers to children, including backover and frontover incidents, and heatstroke from being inadvertently left in a vehicle. The organization works to prevent tragedies through data collection, education and public awareness, policy change and survivor advocacy.