



Remarks by Amy Cohen
Press Conference Supporting
Motor Vehicle Safety Title in Moving Forward Act
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On October 8, 2013, my 12-year-old son Sammy became one of the 100 Americans killed in a traffic crash that day. In the 2,450 days since he was killed, well over a quarter of a million Americans have died on our roadways.

Today as we face an unprecedented pandemic, there also is a silent, smoldering killer in our midst. Traffic violence is an unrecognized, preventable public health crisis and, as many other nations have proven, one we can solve now. The Motor Vehicle Safety Title in Moving Forward Act (H.R. 2) is a huge step forward. The safety upgrades in the bill, especially those to require advanced driver assistance systems in all new cars, will help to prevent or mitigate crashes and would likely have saved Sammy's life. If enacted, these crucial protections will save many, many lives.

Sammy was strong, determined and a fighter. He stood up for what was right and I stand here today, honoring his memory, and inspired by his actions in the short twelve years that he lived.

Every day I ask myself, how can Sammy – who was so strong, boisterous, outspoken and had such a zest for life – not be with us today? But he was not always so outspoken. Sammy hardly said more than a few words until he was three. Then one day, he stood in wonder at the elephant cage at the Bronx Zoo and said, “the elephant ate the whole apple.” That sentence really was Sammy's first word, and since then he did not stop asking questions and marveling at life's many wonders.

He embraced learning, loved sports and was a true renaissance man excelling at soccer, baseball and sometimes hockey. He was determined and rode his bike in a 100-mile “Century” ride just a few weeks before his death.

I miss him. Now I have no one to argue with me about the dumbest things, drag me to the gym to keep me young and hug me tightly as only Sammy could. There is no younger brother to watch over my daughter Tamar and be her best friend and her fiercest advocate.

Just a few days before Sammy was killed, a friend said that we had the perfect family. And for the nearly 13 years with Sammy, it felt like we did.

All it took was one driver operating a large vehicle with little to no safety measures to run over and kill my son. In an instant, Sammy lost his promising future and our lives were shattered.

Please for Sammy, all of the members of Families for Safe Streets, and your own families, join us in confronting the epidemic of traffic violence. We have lost our children, our parents, our siblings, and our spouses. We know the horrors of this crisis. We pour our pain into purpose. We have the courage to fight for the life-saving measures in the Motor Vehicle Safety Title and hope you will join us.



Families for Safe Streets (FSS) confronts the epidemic of traffic violence by advocating for life-saving changes and providing support to those who have been impacted by crashes. Comprised of individuals who have been injured or lost loved ones, FSS was founded in 2014 in New York City and is now growing as a national movement with chapters forming across the country.

Amy's son Sammy was killed in front of their home when his soccer ball went into the street. The street is a two-lane, one way road. A driver in the first lane stopped and motioned him into the road to get his ball. A large commercial van with no safety equipment failed to stop and killed him.