



STATEMENT OF
Dr. Deanna Wathington, MD, MPH, FAAFP
at Press Conference on the Surface Transportation Investment Act of 2021
June 15, 2021

Good afternoon. I am Dr. Deanna Wathington, Executive Board Chair of the American Public Health Association, and a Board member of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety.

I want to thank Senator Blumenthal, our panel of safety activists, and the brave victim advocates who are here with us today calling on Congress to advance comprehensive safety standards for cars and trucks in the transportation legislation now being debated by Congress.

Throughout the country, doctors, nurses and other health care professionals are on the receiving end of the outcomes of violent crashes happening on our roadways. We treat the victims of motor vehicle and truck crashes caused by distracted driving, impaired driving, speeding, drowsy driving and other dangerous and deadly behaviors. And, way too often, we have to tell their loved ones that they did not survive. I am participating in this event today because just like we are putting shots in arms to prevent disease, we can put safety tech into cars to prevent crashes.

As first-hand witnesses to the carnage caused by crashes, the medical and public health community has long stood for commonsense motor vehicle safety improvements. Over the years, “vaccines” for reducing crash fatalities and injuries have included shoulder and lap safety belts, air bags, roof crush standards, and electronic stability control, just to name a few. In fact, more than 600,000 lives were saved because of these and other safety improvements between 1960 and 2012, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Today, we are calling on Congress to advance “next-gen” safety technologies including advanced driver assistance systems for new cars and trucks and the other improvements discussed by my fellow speakers. Doctors and nurses are always seeking and using the most modern, effective medical equipment and tools to save lives. We never withhold an available cure from a sick patient. The same practice must apply to motor vehicle safety.

It’s time for Congress to swiftly to advance proven, lifesaving remedies.

Thank you.