



**ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY**

**STATEMENT OF
Cathy Chase, President, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety,
at Press Conference on the Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface
Transportation (INVEST) in America Act (H.R. 3684)
June 30, 2021**

Good afternoon. Over the 5-year time period of the INVEST in America Act, nearly 200,000 people will be needlessly killed and 14 million more injured in motor vehicle crashes without bold – yet completely commonsense and research-based – policy improvements. Thankfully, the Members of Congress here today and others have chosen to say this death and injury toll is inexcusable, insufferable and intolerable. They have led with action and determination bolstered by the bravery and personal sacrifices of the families here and throughout the country who share their living nightmares to advocate for policy changes to protect us all. It is incumbent upon us to respect and honor their loved ones by advancing proven solutions that prevent future tragedies.

We have technological solutions to accomplish this achievable goal and this chart demonstrates it. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, or IIHS, has proven that automatic emergency braking, or AEB, will reduce front-to-rear car crashes by 50 percent and large truck crashes by 40 percent. Yet some auto makers still upcharge for these features, known as advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS). This inequitable practice endangers families who cannot afford to pay more for this lifesaving equipment and everyone sharing the roadways with them.

We commend the House for including this requirement in the INVEST in America Act for cars and large trucks. It is truly a game changer to curb persistent roadway threats such as drunk, drugged, distracted and drowsy driving. However, there's a lethal loophole for small-to-medium size trucks, like the ones driving through neighborhoods every day to make next-day e-commerce deliveries.

As Congress continues consideration of the transportation bill, we need a course correction on this omission to make sure all road users - pedestrians, bicyclists, children playing in front of their houses, and other vulnerable road users - will be protected by verified safety technology.

Numerous other sections of the INVEST in America Act move the ball forward on promising technologies. We have long stood arm-in-arm with MADD to end impaired driving. IIHS estimates that widespread deployment of impaired driving prevention technology could save

more than 9,000 lives each year. Thank you, Congresswoman Dingell, Chairwoman Schakowsky, Congresswoman Rice and all the sponsors of the HALT Drunk Driving Act which is included in the INVEST in America Act.

The bill also addresses the tragedy of ‘hot car’ deaths of children with technology -- a detection and alert system requirement. I’d like to thank the leading property-casualty insurance companies and trade associations on Advocates’ Board that sent a letter in support of this provision to Congress today.

There are many other noteworthy auto safety provisions in the INVEST in America Act including ending keyless ignition problems, improving the seatback standard, updating the New Car Assessment Program, enhancing limo safety, and prioritizing the safety of vulnerable road users through a Safe System approach, among others. I encourage you to go to our website, saferoads.org, to see our Safety Spotlights which provide a comprehensive explanation of the safety sections.

Must-pass, multi-year transportation bills like the INVEST in America Act have traditionally featured safety upgrades. As the House passes this bill and then the Senate considers its bill in a few weeks, we urge Congress to meet this moment, reject dangerous industry carve-outs and exemptions, and truly advance safety for everyone.