



**ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY**

**STATEMENT OF
Cathy Chase, President
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
at Press Conference on Safety Advances in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
November 22, 2021**

Good afternoon. I am Cathy Chase, President of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. Advocates is a coalition of public health, safety, law enforcement and consumer organizations, and insurance companies and agents working to advance safer vehicles; safer drivers, passengers and road users; and safer roads. On behalf of our Board of Directors and staff, I want to thank Congresswoman Jan Schakowsky for the invitation to be a part of this wonderful event celebrating the safety victories in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act together with some of our nation's public health and safety leaders and heroes.

Progress on vehicle and traffic safety issues requires persistence, patience and passion. Congresswoman Schakowsky embodies these traits. As the Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce, she shepherded multiple successes in the infrastructure bill which will make our roadways safer and help ensure families remain whole. As a result, the bill signed into law by President Biden last week included lifesaving improvements, but it also included some loopholes. This reality just fortifies our resolve to ensure that the U.S. Department of Transportation, or DOT, uses the provisions as a floor, and not a ceiling, for what must be achieved. As we head into the holiday season, a quarter of this Administration's term will be in the proverbial rear view mirror. The DOT must move expeditiously. With each passing moment, people are in danger on our roads.

Game-changing advances, such as impaired driving prevention technology and crash avoidance systems including automatic emergency braking, or AEB, which reduces front-to-rear crashes by fifty percent, must be required in new vehicles. Every family deserves to be protected from the threat of impaired driving and every family deserves the safest braking systems, not just those who can afford higher-end vehicles or add-on luxury packages.

Additionally, systems to detect and alert hot cars incidents, better-performing headlights, an update of the seat back standard, potential hood and bumper safety upgrades, guards to prevent underride crashes with trucks, closing limo safety gaps and road safety infrastructure

improvements must result from this landmark legislation. It's now time for the U.S. DOT to turn these decrees into directives for truck and car manufacturers.

We are at a transformative time in surface transportation history. With crash deaths reaching nearly 40,000 in 2020 and spiking even more during the first half of this year, there's an urgency to implement proven solutions. We all will continue to work together to urge President Biden, who personally experienced the tragic loss of loved ones in a crash, to achieve our shared goal of ending traffic fatalities.

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