

# **Motor Vehicle Crash Fatalities and Injuries are at Historical Highs Transportation Funding Bill Should Not be Used to Compromise Traffic Safety Oppose Anti-Safety Amendments to and Sections in HR 4820**

**We urge you to OPPOSE amendments to HR 4820:**

- **#15 and 58:**
  - These amendments prohibit the use of funds to promulgate certain new safety rules and will have a negative impact on advancing urgently needed vehicle safety improvements.
- **#20 Impaired Driving Prevention Technology:**
  - This amendment would prohibit the use of funds being used to implement Sec. 24220 of the IIJA, which mandates new vehicles be equipped with passive impaired driving prevention technology.
  - Alcohol-impaired driving is a persistent factor in crash fatalities and injuries on our roadways, accounting for 30 percent of traffic deaths each year on average.
  - An average of one alcohol-impaired driving fatality occurred every 39 minutes in 2021.
  - In 2019, the estimated total comprehensive cost of drunk driving was \$296 billion annually. Accounting for inflation only, that amounts to \$352 billion in 2023 dollars.
  - Alcohol-impaired driving negatively impacts businesses as well. The total cost to employers of motor vehicle crashes with an alcohol-impaired employee or dependent driving (both on-the-job and off-the-job) was \$8 billion in 2018 (expressed in 2019 dollars). Accounting for inflation only, that amounts to nearly \$10 billion in 2023 dollars.
  - According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), alcohol-detection systems could save more than 10,158 lives a year in the U.S., accounting for more than 25 percent of road fatalities.
  - A survey by AAA found 70 percent support for “a law requiring all new cars to have a built-in technology that would not let the car start if the driver’s alcohol level is over the legal limit.”
  - A 2022 MADD poll found nine of 10 Americans support technology that is integrated into a car’s electronics to prevent drunk driving. And, 82 percent supported a Congressional mandate for drunk driving prevention technology in all new cars.
- **#93 Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB):**
  - This amendment would prohibit the use of funds to finalize, implement, or enforce the notice of proposed rulemaking related to Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB).

- On average, 118 people were killed every day on roads in the U.S. in 2021, totaling nearly 43,000 fatalities for the year. An additional 2.5 million people were injured. This represents a 27% increase in deaths in just a decade.
- Early projections for 2022 show traffic fatalities remain high. Other road users experienced increases in deaths as well. Pedestrian fatalities increased 18 percent, and bicyclist deaths were up 12 percent from 2019 (pre-pandemic) to 2021.
- Conservatively, the annual economic cost of motor vehicle crashes is approximately \$340 billion (2019 dollars). This means that every person living in the U.S. essentially pays an annual “crash tax” of over \$1,000. Moreover, the total value of societal harm from motor vehicle crashes in 2019 was nearly \$1.4 trillion.
- Traffic fatalities, injuries and costs are a public health emergency in urgent need of proven solutions including AEB.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has calculated that AEB systems could potentially address over 3,000 fatalities, over 160,000 injuries, and more than 1.1 million property damage only crashes per year.
- AEB will help to prevent or mitigate crashes involving leading crash contributors including – drunk, drugged, distracted and drowsy driving and speeding.
- Countries around the world have already moved forward, and ahead of the U.S., to require this proven technology to protect their citizens and road users from harm.
- **#122 Rear-End Collision Avoidance:**
  - This amendment prohibits the U.S. DOT from contributing funds to NHTSA to enforce rules and regulation for center high mounted stop lamps, a type of rear brake light.
  - In 2019, there were nearly 2.2 million rear-end police reported crashes involving light vehicles, which led to 1,798 deaths and 574,000 injuries.
  - This amendment adds an unreasonable restriction on NHTSA's ability to conduct research and improve public safety on the nation's roads.
- **#4, 25, 63, 91, 101, 125, 148 and 163:** These amendments reduce FY 2024 funding for the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), DOT agencies, and DOT leadership salaries and will impede the DOT’s urgently needed efforts and mission to ensure the safety of the Nation’s transportation system.

**We also OPPOSE Sections 131 through 134:**

- **Sec. 131:** Prohibits use of funds to advance rules for speed limiting devices in commercial motor vehicles (CMVs). Speeding is a persistent and deadly issue that must and can be addressed with proven technology. These safety systems are in most trucks on the road today. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has recommended requiring the use of speed limiting devices since 2012.

- **Sec. 132 and 133:** Prohibits use of funds to require inward-facing cameras for the Safe Driver Apprenticeship Pilot Program (SDAP) and to require the SDAP is registered with the Department of Labor's "industry-driven, high-quality career" Registered Apprenticeship Program to ensure the integrity of the SDAP. CMV drivers under the age of 19 are four times more likely to be involved in fatal crashes, and CMV drivers between the ages of 19 and 20 are six times more likely to be involved in fatal crashes than all truck drivers. This age group should not be driving big rigs across the country, but the pilot program allows them to do so. Commonsense safeguards for the program should not be removed or weakened.
- **Sec. 134:** Prohibits funding to enforce requirements related to electronic logging devices (ELDs) for carriers transporting livestock and insects. Truck driver fatigue is a known and serious issue that contributes to truck crashes, fatalities and injuries. ELDs have been required since 2017 and are a proven technology to record hours of service (HOS) limits and to ensure drivers are not exceeding the maximum hours behind the wheel.

**Roadway fatalities, injuries and related costs continue to be exceedingly high and need to be reduced, not compounded!**