



SAFE ROADS FOR ALL USERS



A comprehensive approach has been the cornerstone of Advocates' traffic safety efforts for 35 years. Advancing safety policy that targets the leading traffic safety dangers and employs research-verified solutions is the most effective means to advance safe road users, safe vehicles and safe roadway environments.

In 2026, the IIJA (Pub. Law 117 - 58) will expire. Leading up to the next major transportation reauthorization legislation, Congress will deliberate over provisions and funding levels for inclusion. This process provides an opportunity to build on and perpetuate the broad safety progress made in the IIJA. Our work will focus on accelerating adoption of vehicle safety improvements, compelling states to pass comprehensive traffic safety laws either by incentivizing with or withholding federal grants and ensuring robust funding for roadway safety infrastructure improvements consistent with Complete Streets policy and the Safe System Approach as demonstrated by the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program, among others.

The data clearly illustrates the urgency for prioritization of safety. More than 40,000 people are estimated to have been killed in traffic crashes in 2023, traffic fatalities continue to be historically high, and especially so for VRUs. As the public opinion poll commissioned by Advocates after the 2024 election demonstrates, there is an awareness of the need to improve safety on our roadways and the public is concerned about its absence. These results should serve as a consistent reminder and a strong impetus—the public values safety on U.S. roads and demands safe roadway travel whether they are inside or outside a vehicle. [You can view the poll results here.](#)

As state legislatures and Congress identify and advance their priorities in 2025, we urge the safety of all road users to be the leading concern in transportation policy initiatives including as the ramp up to the next transportation reauthorization begins. States must close gaps in their traffic safety laws. Congress must perpetuate the robust funding directed to lifesaving roadway improvements and build on the vehicle safety gains including by encouraging the U.S. DOT to advance overdue vehicle safety rulemakings over the finish line. Families across the U.S. need and demand action.



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VEHICLES EQUIPPED WITH AUTOMATED DRIVING SYSTEMS (ADS) INCLUDING AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES (AVs)

Looking to the future, vehicles equipped with an ADS and AVs may one day safely operate on public roads and realize potential societal benefits. However, to date this is far from being accomplished. To ensure that AVs are developed and deployed to support the safety of the public on public roads, to realize societal benefits and to mitigate known as well as foreseeable issues, Advocates led a broad group of stakeholders in the development of the AV Tenets. The AV Tenets are a people-and-safety-first approach and should be the basis of AV policy. These commonsense safeguards establish a baseline for safety upon which innovation can flourish.

Federal AV Policy Dos

- Prioritize the safety of all road users.
- Guarantee accessibility for all.
- Preserve consumer and worker rights.
- Ensure local control and sustainable transportation.

Federal AV Policy Do Nots

- Exempt tens of thousands of AVs from current federal safety standards prior to issuance of new safety standards for the ADS and related issues including cybersecurity.
- Allow essential safety systems to be “turned off.”
- Fail to require adequate information be provided to regulators and the public.
- Preempt state laws and regulations in the absence of federal regulations.
- Lack safeguards to ensure promised societal benefits such as improved safety, mobility, equity and environmental outcomes, while protecting workers.
- Omit proper oversight for testing.
- Leave people with disabilities and older adults without an assurance of access and safety.
- Relegate action to advisory committees.

Diverse groups from across the country support the approach of AV Tenets. The public has repeatedly noted their concerns, but also affirm that their concerns could be adequately addressed by minimum government safety requirements. Let’s work together to ensure a safe future on our nation’s roadways.

