



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

In advance of tomorrow's Executive Session, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) submits this letter in support of the She Develops Regulations in Vehicle Equality and Safety (She DRIVES) Act (S.161). We commend Committee Member Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE) for sponsoring this legislation and Committee Members Sens. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), as well as Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA), for cosponsoring it. Advocates respectfully requests this letter be included in the hearing record.

Historic High Levels of Motor Vehicle Crash Fatalities and Injuries Require Swift Intervention

On average, 116 people were killed every day on roads in the U.S., totaling just over 42,500 fatalities in 2022.¹ An additional 2.38 million people were injured.² This is a 26 percent increase in deaths in just a decade.³ Early projections for 2023 traffic fatalities remain at a similar historic high level; nearly 41,000 people are estimated to have died that year.⁴

In addition to the high physical and emotional toll of motor vehicle crashes, the annual economic cost is approximately \$340 billion (2019 dollars).⁵ This figure equates to every person living in the U.S. essentially paying an annual "crash tax" of over \$1,000. Moreover, the total value of societal harm from motor vehicle crashes in 2019, which includes loss of life, pain and decreased quality of life, was nearly \$1.4 trillion.⁶ According to the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS), motor vehicle crashes cost employers \$72.2 billion in direct crash-related expenses in 2019.⁷

The She DRIVES Act Addresses a Dangerous Gap in Vehicle Safety

The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) has found that while vehicles have improved protections for occupants involved in crashes over the years, female passengers remain at a greater risk of death and of certain injury types.⁸ One of the essential tools to address this troubling disparity is obtaining the proper data in crash testing. With such information, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), research organizations such as the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) and automakers can address these issues. The She DRIVES Act requires, among numerous improvements, the use of the most advanced testing devices available and a much-needed update of crash testing standards. Advocates urges this Committee to advance this lifesaving legislation.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to continuing to work with this Committee to improve safety on our nation's roadways.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

cc: Members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation

¹ Traffic Safety Facts 2022: A Compilation of Motor Vehicle Traffic Crash Data, NHTSA, Dec. 2024, DOT HS 813 656 (Annual Report 2022).
² Annual Report 2022.
³ Annual Report 2022; [comparing 2012 to 2022].
⁴ Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2023, NHTSA, Apr. 2024, DOT HS 813 561 (Early Estimates 2023).
⁵ The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Dec. 2022, DOT HS 813 403. (Economic and Societal Impact 2019).
⁶ Economic and Societal Impact 2019.
⁷ Cost of Motor Vehicle Crashes to Employers – 2019, Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, March 2021.
⁸ GAO, DOT Should Take Additional Actions to Improve the Information Obtained from Crash Test Dummies, GAO-23-105595 (Mar. 2023).