



4700 Roseville Road
North Richlands, CA 95660

Katie Smith
916.244.1964
ksmith@thecapcenter.org

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004

Anthony Green
202.662.0606
agreen@safekids.org

June 9, 2014

Honorable Brian Kelly
Secretary
California State Transportation Agency
915 Capitol Mall Suite 350 B
Sacramento, CA 95814
By Fax: (916) 323-5440

Ms. Rhonda Craft
Director
Office of Traffic Safety
915 Capitol Mall, Suite 350B
Sacramento, CA 95814
By Fax: 916-509-3055

Dear Secretary Kelly and Director Craft:

At this early date in the summer season, two of the eight children who have died of heatstroke after they were left behind in cars have occurred in California: recently a four-year-old in Bakersfield and the first in the nation involved 9-month-old Giovanni Alonzo Hernandez in San Jose. These tragedies are tracked at San Francisco State University based on news accounts. We write to urge the Department and its safety office to use all of its best efforts to get the word out about leaving children behind in cars. One particular initiative we urge is to place such messages on the state's highway and road LED signs at least on warm days.

The main message is a warning to parents and caregivers, and one suggestion is "Never Leave a Child Behind in Car." NHTSA's message is "Where's Baby? Look Before You Lock."

We have learned a great deal from research conducted about heat stroke deaths through surveys of parents and caregivers who transport children and pedestrians who have noticed a child left behind in a car. The survey indicated that bystanders may hesitate out of concern for legal trouble. They might be moved towards action through public awareness and encouragement, and the imprimatur of government by virtue of the LED signs. Thus, we ask you to consider an alternating message for bystanders who might see a child left behind in cars: "See a child left alone in a car, call 911."

We've seen the success of LED signs as part of similar campaigns in the past, such as with the "Click It or Ticket" campaign and Amber Alerts. The reach of these signs is extensive. We are also working with Texas state officials on a similar initiative.

We know that the State of California has been a leader in working to combat this tragic loss of life and, respectfully, we suggest this cost-neutral idea. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katie Smith
Safe Kids California

Anthony Green
Safe Kids Worldwide