

**Letter in Support of Authorizing Occupant Protection
High Visibility Enforcement Campaigns to Include Child Passenger Safety
Supported by Safe Kids Worldwide, the National Safety Council,
Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Advocates for Auto and Highway Safety**

November 12, 2015

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We join together to encourage the conference committee considering the surface transportation reauthorization bill, the DRIVE Act (H.R. 22), to continue to raise awareness about the need for parents and caregivers to buckle up their kids in a car seat for every ride, every time. We urge a change involving only four words.

The transportation authorization law includes vital child road safety measures which have proven successful in saving kids in motor vehicle crashes, the leading cause of child death. We appreciate your continued support for the Section 405(b) occupant protection grant program. However, we believe there is an additional opportunity to enhance child road safety efforts in section 4004(b)(2) of the House bill authorizing the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to conduct high visibility enforcement campaigns.

We deeply appreciate the role our law enforcement officers play in road safety through high visibility enforcement programs. We encourage you to amend section 4004(b)(2) of the legislation to read "Increase use of seatbelts and child car seats by occupants of motor vehicles." Adding "and child car seats" will ensure that the existing occupant protection program focuses on increasing both seatbelt and child car seat use. Importantly, we are not proposing to add an additional campaign beyond those authorized in Section 4004(b).

We have made good progress in reducing childhood unintentional injury leading to death. Between 2004 and 2013, the number of traffic crash fatalities involving children 14 and under decreased by 47%.¹ Car seat use reduces the risk for death to infants by 71% and to toddlers (ages one to four) by 54%.² Further, the use of child restraint systems is strong, reaching a high point in 2011 and 2012 of 91% based on NHTSA roadside observations.³

However, it is of great concern that 9% of drivers were observed not using car seats to buckle up their child.⁴ A 2013 Safe Kids survey of 1000 parents found that one in four parents do not restrain their kids every time, on every ride. Despite the fact that 60 percent of crashes involving children occur 10 minutes or less from home, a high percentage of parents surveyed noted they might not use car seats on short rides.⁵

There is strong value in high visibility enforcement campaigns in heightening the public's awareness of the need to always use occupant protection. We urge inclusion of those four words into the bill to build awareness that will make the most vulnerable people in cars safer.

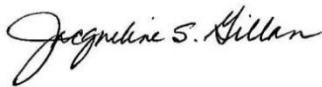
Sincerely,



Kate Carr
President & CEO
Safe Kids Worldwide



Deborah Hersman
President & CEO
National Safety Council



Jacqueline Gillan
President
Advocates for Highway and
Auto Safety

¹ National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2015, June). Children: 2013 data. (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 812 154). Washington, DC: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Traffic Safety Facts, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812154.pdf>, accessed 11.06.2015

² Ibid.

³ Pickrell, T, Liu, C, Occupant Restraint Use in 2013: Results From the NOPUS Controlled Intersection Study, Mathematical Analysis Division, National Center for Statistics and Analysis National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, January 2015, available at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/Pubs/812080.pdf>, accessed 11.02.2015

⁴ Ferguson RW, Green A, Walker L. Buckle Up: Every Ride, Every Time. Washington, DC: Safe Kids Worldwide, September 2013, available at http://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/documents/ResearchReports/cps_study_2013_0.pdf, accessed 11.02.2015

⁵ Ibid; Also Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Partners for Child Passenger Safety, Fact and Trend Report, September 2008, available at https://injury.research.chop.edu/sites/default/files/documents/2008_ft.pdf, accessed 11.09.2015