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LOOKING UNDER THE HOOD: THE STATE OF NHTSA AND MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY

THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2025

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade,

Committee on Energy and Commerce,

Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:03 a.m., in Room 2123, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Russ Fulcher [vice chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Fulcher, Harshbarger, Obernolte, Fry, Kean, Goldman, Guthrie (ex officio), Schakowsky, Castor, Soto, Trahan, Mullin, Clarke, Dingell, Veasey, Kelly, Schrier, and Pallone (ex officio).

Also Present: Representatives Latta and Dunn.

Staff Present: Jessica Donlon, General Counsel; Sydney Greene, Director of

Finance and Logistics; Megan Jackson, Staff Director; Noah Jackson, Clerk, Communications & Technology; Daniel Kelly, Press Secretary; Sophie Khanahmadi, Deputy Staff Director; Alex Khlopin, Clerk, Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade; Giulia Leganski, Chief Counsel, Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade; Sarah Meier, Counsel and Parliamentarian; Joel Miller, Chief Counsel; Evangelos Razis, Professional Staff Member; Jackson Rudden, Staff Assistant; Chris Sarley, Member Services/Stakeholder Director; Matt VanHyfte, Communications Director; Hannah Anton, Minority Policy Analyst; Waverly Gordon, Minority Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel; Tiffany Guarascio, Minority Staff Director; Lisa Hone, Minority Chief Counsel; La'Zale Johnson, Minority Intern; Megan Kanne, Professional Staff Member; Phoebe Rouge, Minority FTC Detailee; Destiny Sheppard, Minority Intern; and Maxwell Stern, Minority Intern.

Mr. Fulcher. [Presiding.] The subcommittee will come to order.

The chairman recognizes himself for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

Good morning, and thank you to our witnesses for joining us today -- today's educational hearing on motor vehicle safety and the state of the automotive industry. And I look forward to a robust and informative discussion that will help Congress, and specifically this subcommittee, gain a clearer understanding of motor vehicle safety issues and its regulator, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, or NHTSA.

Automobile safety has been a longstanding topic of this subcommittee, and we play a crucial role in ensuring the vehicles on our roadways are safe for families, workers, and the traveling public. Automobiles are deeply woven into the fabric of American life. From commuting to work, to picking up kids at school, to taking a cross-country road trip, automobiles are both a cultural icon and a pillar of the American Dream. That is why today's hearing marks the beginning of a bipartisan, member-driven, and stakeholder-informed process to develop a motor vehicle safety title as part of Congress' broader efforts to reauthorize our surface transportation programs.

As part of this, the subcommittee is spearheading a bipartisan process to solicit stakeholder input to inform a motor vehicle safety title. Further, myself and Chairman Bilirakis will seek priorities from our committee members to ensure our product reflects the priorities of our diverse membership.

Our primary objective will be to find solutions to address the tragic reality that nearly 40,000 Americans die annually from motor vehicle crashes; a staggering and tragic statistic. These crashes also lead to hundreds of billions in economic losses and cost taxpayers tens of billions of dollars.

NHTSA plays a central role in addressing this pressure issue through its education

programs, regulatory work, and enforcement efforts. Congress must ensure that the agency is equipped and needed to fulfill its mission and save lives.

Second, we must continue to recognize the economic importance of the automotive sector. This industry is America's largest manufacturing base, supporting tens of millions of jobs across the country and serving as a major driver of exports. As global competitors, especially China, seek to dominate the future of automotive innovation, Congress must examine how our regulatory structure can foster rather than hinder American leadership. This includes looking at ways to modernize and streamline regulations while maintaining our strong safety standards.

Third, we must embrace the future of mobility. The emergence of automated vehicle technology presents a generational opportunity to prevent crashes, restore independence to millions of elderly and disabled Americans, and bolster economic growth. Congress must use this opportunity to advance a robust regulatory framework for autonomous vehicle technology.

To achieve these goals, I look forward to working in a bipartisan manner with Chairman Bilirakis, Ranking Member Schakowsky, Chairman Guthrie, and Ranking Member Pallone. Together, we can craft smart, balanced policy solutions that save lives, strengthen American competitiveness, and shape the future of transportation for the better.

Thank you again to our witnesses for being here today, and I look forward to your testimony.

With that, the chairman recognizes the ranking member, Ms. Schakowsky, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fulcher follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you so much.

I want to congratulate and thank Cathy Chase who is with -- what is it -- Advocates -- it has got a longer name than that, except that it is advocates for safety.

And I want to say that we were able to pass a number of pieces of legislation, some that we will talk about later and some that we need to push forward on. But I do just want to say that it is true that about 70,000 people have died on the highway, and we have to do better than that. These are numbers that are going up, not down. And so we have to focus on what are the things that are going to save more people on the highway.

So I am happy right now to call on Mr. Mullin to talk about highway safety and focus on his community. It is yours.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Schakowsky follows:]

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Mr. Mullin. Thank you, Ranking Member Schakowsky. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Recent transformative developments in vehicle technology have been exciting to see, and they speak to the need for congressional action. One topic of our hearing today will be autonomous vehicles. As someone who represents most of the San Francisco peninsula, which has been the epicenter of autonomous vehicle development, I have seen firsthand how rapidly this technology is advancing.

While other areas of the country are beginning to take note, Waymos have been cruising through my district for years now. It has truly been remarkable to see and experience this technology firsthand. I see its potential for transforming traffic safety and eventually leading to a rapid decline in injuries and fatalities. And I believe as it develops we have a responsibility to make sure it is safe and not causing unintended consequences. This is why my colleagues and I have been asking NHTSA to collect more information about AVs for years. But the agency has declined to do so, despite the fact that more and more AVs are driving on our roads. And this is not a partisan issue. NHTSA could have done more under the previous administration. And now under the Trump administration, I am even more concerned about the agency's recent steps to reduce reporting requirements and cut staffing.

I look forward to speaking with our witnesses later today about why we need to be doing more and not less.

Another issue of safety that this committee has looked at for years is distracted driving, which in 2023 was responsible for more than 3,000 traffic deaths in the U.S. One technology that may pose new risk is the replacement of traditional tactile controls with dashboard touch screens, among other developments. Other countries are already

exploring whether these new technologies contribute to distracted driving, and I believe we should be too.

That is why I recently introduced the Driver Technology and Pedestrian Safety Act to study how the driver experience, including the use of touch screens, affect driver attention and therefore pedestrian safety.

I want to thank Ms. Cathy Chase and Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety here today for their input and strong support of that bill. I look forward to discussing all of these issues in today's hearing.

And with that, I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mullin follows:]

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Mr. Fulcher. Thank you to the ranking member.

The chairman recognizes the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Guthrie, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

The Chair. Thank you.

Thank you, Vice Chairman Fulcher. Thank you for conducting this hearing today. And I want to say good morning and thanks to all of our witnesses for being here. We appreciate you being here.

This hearing provides an opportunity -- an important opportunity for this committee to better understand the current state of vehicle safety, emerging trends, and the critical role of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NHTSA.

The Committee on Energy and Commerce has long played a leading role in shaping automotive policy, and safety is at the core of that work. And as Chairman Fulcher noted, today's hearing marks the beginning of a thoughtful process, a bipartisan process, to develop a motor vehicle safety title as part of the broader surface transportation reauthorization efforts.

I understand the important role the auto industry plays in American manufacturing and competitiveness. My district is home to many automotive component parts manufacturers and create thousands of jobs, most famously home of the Corvette. So the Corvette comes from about 4 miles from my house. It is important to ensure motor vehicles and their components meet the highest safety standards to protect the public and support the millions of workers who build and maintain the vehicles on our roads.

Together, our committee will develop smart, safety-first policies that modernize regulations to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

This is also a moment to lead globally in emerging technologies, particularly in artificial intelligence. Autonomous vehicles provide an important real-world application of AI to acknowledge these and demonstrate the substantial benefits AI can provide to the public through significant economic and social advancement. Whether through reduced traffic fatalities that my friend Ranking Member Schakowsky discussed and my friend from California, Mr. Mullin, discussed -- reduced fatalities that obviously are shared by our side of the aisle -- we need to support the mobility challenges, AVs can offer an opportunity and independence to millions of Americans.

Further, our work on AVs demonstrates how Congress through existing regulatory frameworks can appropriate, regulate sector-specific AI applications.

And I want to thank Vice Chairman Fulcher for leading this hearing, and I look forward to working with Ranking Member Pallone and all of our colleagues on motor vehicle and safety issues in Congress. I appreciate the witnesses for being here. Look forward to your testimony and the questions.

And I will yield back.

[The prepared statement of Chair Guthrie follows:]

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Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The chairman recognizes the ranking member of the full committee, Mr. Pallone, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Fatalities and injuries on America's roads remain unacceptably high. Almost 40,000 people died on U.S. roadways last year. That is an increase of more than 10 percent from a decade ago. And the economic cost of this safety crisis is enormous, almost $1 trillion a year in medical bills, emergency services, lost productivity, insurance costs, workplace loss, legal expenses, and property damage. Drunk, distracted, and drowsy driving, as well as speeding, by a relatively small number of serial offenders are the leading causes of fatalities and injuries on our roads. And right now, there are proven solutions to this safety crisis but, unfortunately, they have not been widely adopted by automobile manufacturers.

Congress took action to address automobile safety issues with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in 2021, and it directs the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, NHTSA, to adopt rules that deter drunk driving, avert child deaths in hot cars, and keep cars in their lanes. Unfortunately, many of these rulemakings are not yet complete, and the auto industry is suing to challenge one of the lifesaving rules that NHTSA completed last year. That rule requires new cars to warn the driver and apply the brakes when a collision is imminent.

As our Nation's auto safety agency, NHTSA has an important mandate to save lives by establishing safety standards, investigating vehicle defects, and enforcing recalls. We must ensure NHTSA has the staff and other resources as well as all the authority it needs to protect Americans on our roadways.

Unfortunately, rather than strengthening NHTSA, the Trump administration is undermining NHTSA's critical work to make our roads safer. Staff cuts at NHTSA have led to the departure of many of the highly skilled and experienced employees it needs to move forward with this lifesaving work. NHTSA is also hamstrung by the Trump administration's misguided executive orders, requiring the repeal of essential auto safety rules before adopting new rules.

Instead of focusing on proven solutions to make cars being sold safer, the Trump administration is betting on the promise of autonomous vehicles. And while driverless vehicles have shown some potential, they are not by themselves a solution to dangerous driving and they raise their own concerns. So I call on my Republican colleagues to speak out against this administration's dangerous actions. The American people are counting on us to improve the safety of our Nation's roadways.

But I would like to yield the last 2.5 minutes of my time to Representative Dingell at this time, Mr. Chairman.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Pallone follows:]

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Mrs. Dingell. Thank you, Ranking Member Pallone.

As many of you know, I am a car girl, born and raised in Michigan, part of the American auto industry, and I worked for the industry for more than 30 years. Our auto industry needs certainty. For too long it has been treated like a political football, caught between administrations, with rules and regulations constantly changing. That is not how we support long-term investment, protect jobs, and stay competitive in a global marketplace that is moving full speed towards electrification in advanced vehicle technologies.

For decades, Congress has worked in a bipartisan way to strengthen auto safety. For us to do that, we need a fully functioning NHTSA, and it has been too long since we have seen it. That means finalizing long overdue rules to require advanced impaired driving prevention technology in new vehicles.

NHTSA must also be proactive in addressing emergency vehicle technologies. Autonomous and connected vehicles are not a far-off future; they are here today. And without strong oversight, there are gaps now in regulation that bad actors and foreign adversaries are exploiting at the expense of consumer safety and privacy. And China is going to beat us in the marketplace to boot. Unacceptable.

Safety should never be partisan. We all drive the same roads. We all face the same threats. We need to get, as the ranking member said, a number of rulemakings done and out that passed this committee ages ago, like child safety and drunk driving.

I look forward to working together to support NHTSA advance vehicle safety and innovation, protect consumers, and keep the American auto industry globally competitive and number one in the world.

I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Dingell follows:]

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Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you to the ranking member.

This concludes opening statements. The chair reminds members that pursuant to committee rules, all members' opening statements will be made part of the record.

We thank all our witnesses for being here today and taking the time to testify before the subcommittee. Our witnesses today are Mr. John Bozzella, president and CEO, Alliance for Automotive Innovation; Dr. David Harkey, president, Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and Highway Loss Data Institute; Ms. Catherine Chase, president, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety; and Mr. Jeff Farrah, CEO, Autonomous Vehicle Industry Association.

Per committee custom, each witness will have the opportunity for a 5-minute opening statement, followed by a round of questions from members. The light on the timer in front of you will turn from green to yellow when you have 1 minute left.

And, Mr. Bozzella, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENTS OF JOHN BOZZELLA, PRESIDENT AND CEO, ALLIANCE FOR AUTOMOTIVE INNOVATION; DAVID HARKEY, PRESIDENT, INSURANCE INSTITUTE FOR HIGHWAY SAFETY AND HIGHWAY LOSS DATA INSTITUTE; CATHERINE CHASE, PRESIDENT, ADVOCATES FOR HIGHWAY AND AUTO SAFETY; JEFF FARRAH, CEO, AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF JOHN BOZZELLA

Mr. Bozzella. Chairman Fulcher, Ranking Member Schakowsky, Chairman Guthrie, thank you -- and distinguished members of the subcommittee, thank you for the invitation to share my perspective today on motor vehicle safety in America and policies to modernize the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to achieve a shared mission: helping to save lives and make the roads safer for everyone.

Some context. A healthy, competitive, domestic auto industry is a prized asset among nations. Here at home, the auto industry underpins America's economic and national security. It is our largest manufacturing sector, 5 percent of GDP, 10 million American jobs, pumping $1.2 trillion into the economy every year. But the industry is experiencing headwinds, this includes China, where we are facing unfair competition from government-subsidized vehicles and technologies. And it also includes tariffs which are a significant near-term challenge.

I know the President and his team are finalizing agreements with our automotive trading partners to deliver some clarity. That is positive. But I will say this: Automakers are committed to building and investing in America, but automaking is a long lead time, high-asset manufacturing business. And existing automotive facilities and

global supply chains are massive and complex. They can't be relocated or redirected overnight. It takes time.

Against this backdrop of geopolitical and trade uncertainty, reforming NHTSA should absolutely be a top priority for Congress. When NHTSA works, it actually strengthens the industry's global competitiveness. It can help speed the deployment of lifesaving automotive technologies. It can lead to innovation, increased affordability, and ensure the industry is competitive against China.

The auto industry wants -- it needs -- a functioning and effective safety regulator. We don't have that today. Here is what I have observed over the last several years.

NHTSA has become less transparent and less collaborative. The agency isn't nimble. Rulemakings take too long, if they come at all. NHTSA isn't rating new safety technologies fast enough or often enough to help consumers make informed purchasing decisions. Rules accumulate even when some are clearly obsolete.

Meanwhile, there were nearly 40,000 deaths on our roads last year. It is a shocking and tragic number that isn't acceptable to anyone. And it comes at a time when vehicles are safer and come equipped with more driver assistance technology and crash protection than at any time in history.

So why is this? What is happening? Where a safety partnership once existed, automakers today are surprised by NHTSA's actions. We shouldn't be surprising each other. Instead, we need a revitalized partnership, real dialogue, an aligned research agenda to achieve what I assure you is a shared mission to help save lives and make our roads safer.

I want to note here that we have had good and important dialogue with Secretary Duffy, and I have seen some significant actions to advance safety and balance fuel economy regulations.

So how do we modernize and fix NHTSA? Here are a few ideas. One, move beyond vehicle equipment mandates. Reducing traffic fatalities requires a systemic and behavioral approach to safety.

Two, modernize the New Car Assessment Program to promote innovation, encourage constant safety improvements, and empower customers with clear information about vehicle safety. NHTSA should rethink NCAP, take oversight of the program out of rulemaking and look at how similar programs are working better around the world.

Three, streamline outdated rules. NHTSA should take a look at all Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and ask this question: Are they reducing fatalities and increasing crash survivability or are they obsolete regulatory roadblocks that hurt innovation and delay deployment of lifesaving technologies?

Four, Congress should establish a national autonomous vehicle framework. AVs represent the next leap in personal mobility. They will reduce crashes and congestion, provide transportation for people with disabilities, and transform how we work and live. Countries around the world are racing to dominate autonomy. America should be leading and operating under a set of national standards for safer and immediate AV deployment.

As I have said, we want a functioning and modern NHTSA, an agency that is properly staffed, with enough resources to carry out its primary mission -- vehicle safety -- and is a partner in American innovation and progress.

Thank you. I am happy to take your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bozzella follows:]

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Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Mr. Bozzella.

Dr. Harkey, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF DAVID HARKEY

Dr. Harkey. Vice Chairman Fulcher, Ranking Member Schakowsky, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to share the perspective of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety on the current state of road safety in the U.S. and the role of NHTSA to address our challenges.

Simply put, the United States is in the middle of a road safety emergency. Crash deaths increased nearly 30 percent between 2014 and 2022, from 33,000 to 42,000. This spike is not -- I repeat -- is not a global trend. The U.S. is an outlier. Among 29 high-income countries, we rank at the bottom based on per capita fatality rate, and our rate is more than double the average.

Since its creation in 1966, NHTSA has played a key role in moving safety forward through its consumer safety, data and research programs. The most direct impact on consumer safety is regulation and the issuance of safety standards. For example, the requirement that all vehicles be equipped with frontal airbags is estimated to have saved at least 70,000 lives. Beyond regulation, NHTSA's New Car Assessment Program, which produces the 5-star safety ratings, is an important source of information for consumers shopping for the safest vehicles. The Office of Defects Investigation is also critical for providing consumers with defect notifications and working with the auto industry to make sure problems are resolved quickly.

It is important to understand, however, that NHTSA's role in the safety ecosystem

extends beyond the motor vehicle itself. One cannot separate the design and capabilities of a vehicle from the driver who operates that vehicle or the roadway environment in which it is driven. More than a third of our fatalities on our roadways can be attributed to risky behaviors: speeding, impairment, distraction, and seat belt use.

NHTSA's Behavioral Research program has historically been the only large source of funding in the country to help us understand these challenges and then develop, implement, and evaluate interventions through demonstration projects.

One of the most influential demonstrations that the NHTSA research program engaged in years ago was Click It or Ticket, a high visibility seat belt enforcement program that began as a public-private partnership involving IIHS, NHTSA, and other stakeholders in North Carolina, in the 1990s.

Funds from NHTSA allowed for nationwide expansion of the program by 2003, and this campaign was a key component of a remarkable cultural shift, increasing front seat belt use from 67 to 84 percent. Having robust safety data is critical to understanding what is and is not working and where to invest limited resources.

NHTSA's data collection enables much of the research that IIHS and other organizations conduct. This includes the Fatality Analysis Reporting System and other crash databases, as well as the national roadside survey on impaired driving and the National Occupant Protection Use Survey. Despite its many important roles and significant past achievements, NHTSA is failing to meet the moment by lack of action.

We have repeatedly called on NHTSA to require antilock braking systems for motorcycles, a proven technology that saves lives. We have petitioned NHTSA twice in 10 years to require a motorcycle ABS. Thus far, no response. In the meantime, more than 30 countries have all mandated the lifesaving technology.

In the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, NHTSA was instructed to issue a rule requiring impaired driving prevention technology on new vehicles. The deadline of 2024 for a final rule has passed, and NHTSA has only issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking. A mandate from NHTSA would likely provide just the push it needs, potentially saving nearly 11,000 lives each year.

In many cases, IIHS has found ways to fill gaps left by NHTSA. While we lack regulatory authority, we have substantial influence with consumers and vehicle manufacturers. Our IIHS Top Safety Pick awards complement the 5-star ratings, pushing automakers to improve vehicle structures, airbags, seat belts, and other safety equipment.

As automakers introduce more automation in vehicles, new safety concerns are being raised. Given the lack of regulation or guidance from NHTSA, IIHS has developed partial automation safeguard ratings to help ensure drivers stay engaged while using these systems.

At IIHS we are alarmed by the rising toll of crashes on our Nation's roads and dismayed by an apparent lack of urgency to fix the problem. For this reason, we recently launched an initiative we are calling 30 by 30, a goal to reduce U.S. fatalities 30 percent by 2030. We hope all stakeholders will rally around this vision and pledge specific actions to contribute to the effort.

For our part, we are going to focus on risky behaviors, commercial vehicles, and safety inside and outside of the vehicles. NHTSA specifically has an essential role to play in confronting our current road safety emergency, but doing so requires stronger leadership, a sense of urgency, and a greater willingness to act.

Thank you for your time and interest this morning.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Harkey follows:]

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Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Dr. Harkey.

Ms. Chase, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF CATHERINE CHASE

Ms. Chase. Good morning, Chair Fulcher, Ranking Member Schakowsky, and subcommittee members. I am Cathy Chase, president of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety.

Advocates is a national alliance of leading property casualty insurance companies and agents and public health consumer law enforcement and safety groups, working together to prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and curb economic costs.

Thank you for holding this hearing at a critical time when motor vehicle crash fatalities are at historic highs.

America's roads move an ever increasing number of people and goods. We all rely on some form of motor vehicle for commutes and carpools, for e-commerce packages to be delivered, and for summer family vacations. Unfortunately, we also experience tremendous tragedies on our roadways.

More than 40,000 people were killed and 2.4 million people were injured in crashes in 2023. More than 7,000 were pedestrians, over 6,000 were motorcyclists, and more than 1,000 were bicyclists. And for all of these groups, we have experienced significant increases over the last decade. The leading contributing factors are impaired driving, speeding, unrestrained vehicle occupants, and distracted driving. These are not just statistics, they are family members and friends throughout the country.

Many victim advocates are joining us today in person or virtually. I want to extend my condolences for their losses and thank them for their perseverance to advance effective solutions to prevent crashes.

So while this is the tragic news, the good news is that proven solutions are available and actionable. Since Advocates inception in 1989, we have worked to advance a holistic approach, focusing on safe vehicles, safe road users, and safe roadway environments. This approach is akin to what is known as the safe system approach. Our annual Roadmap to Safety report provides a blueprint for how Congress and State-elected officials can eradicate the motor vehicle crash fatality and injury toll, which by the way comes with a substantial price tag.

The annual economic cost of crashes is approximately $340 billion. This means that every person living in the U.S. essentially pays a crash tax of over $1,000.

One of the most effective strategies for preventing deaths and injuries is proven vehicle safety technologies which meet minimum performance standards. From 1968 through 2019, NHTSA's safety standards have prevented more than 860,000 deaths, 49 million nonfatal injuries, and damage to 65 million vehicles.

When consumers go into auto dealer showrooms to purchase one of the largest items in their family budgets, many prioritize safety. Yet what they might not realize is there are no safety standards for the newer safety technologies. Minimum safety standards are essential because they ensure that auto manufacturers all have to meet a baseline of safety by a certain date.

Additionally, these technologies are building blocks for autonomous vehicles, or AVs. An AV will need to detect and respond to all road users, vehicles, and infrastructure in all conditions -- that is automatic emergency breaking; to monitor and react to blind spots -- that is blind spot detection with intervention; to stay within its

traffic lane -- that is lane keeping assist; to follow speed limits, which is intelligence speed assistance, and to know if the vehicle is occupied, which is occupant detection, among other responsibilities.

Also, until and if we reach the day when everyone is in an AV, drivers will continue to make poor decisions. This is why Ranking Member Schakowsky's leadership with the 21st Century Smart Cars Act, Congresswoman Dingell's leadership on drunk driving with the HALT Act, and other issues, must be brought over the finish line by the U.S. Department of Transportation or advanced in the next transportation reauthorization bill.

In that vein, auto manufacturers and proponents often claim that AVs are safer because they don't drive drunk, distracted, or tired. No one is disputing that. But AVs also may cause crashes that sober, alert, and engaged drivers would routinely avoid. AVs, which are essentially billion-dollar pieces of equipment with years of research, should not drive better than only the worst drivers on our roads.

Especially with all this new technology, NHTSA is an essential agency to be the watchdog and cop on the beat to keep everyone on the roadway safe. The agency conducts important research, collects and analyzes imperative crash data, institutes vehicle safety recalls, and issues minimum safety standards. Its ability to effectively protect the public necessitates sufficient funding and resources.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Chase follows:]

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Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Ms. Chase.

Mr. Farrah, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF JEFF FARRAH

Mr. Farrah. Chair Fulcher, Ranking Member Schakowsky, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning.

My name is Jeff Farrah, the CEO of the Autonomous Vehicle Industry Association, which represents the leading AV companies and is committed to American leadership on autonomous technology.

In recent years, autonomous vehicles have gone from science fiction, to aspirational, to commonplace. Last month, AVIA reported that our members have driven more than 145 million autonomous miles on U.S. public roads, the distance between Earth and Mars. The number of autonomous miles driven by AVIA members has more than doubled in the past year alone, which underscores the tremendous progress our industry has made.

But I will be frank, this progress has occurred in the absence of a Federal policy framework and is therefore leaving U.S. companies at a disadvantage to competitors in China and other countries. For that reason, earlier this year, AVIA released detailed Federal policy recommendations called Securing American Leadership in Autonomous Vehicles.

Today, policymakers are faced with a choice. We can continue to leave a void at the Federal level, which helps China's ambitions to dominate the global AV market and also puts U.S. States at the forefront of policymaking that is desperately in need of

Federal direction.

Alternatively, this committee can lead the way on a Federal framework for AVs across all vehicle classes, regardless of vehicle weight or size. In doing so, Congress must answer key questions on vehicle design, construction and performance, and promote safer roads, more accessible vehicles, and strengthen supply chains. Putting in place a Federal policy framework will have the support of an American public that is increasingly riding in autonomous vehicles and loving the experience.

Data shared in my written testimony demonstrates what we have long known to be true: Those who are passengers in autonomous vehicles quickly become comfortable with the technology and want to experience it again and again. Even those who are not passengers in AVs but live in areas where AVs operate become convinced that of their safety and benefit.

Our industry is eager to engage with Congress on AV-specific Federal policies that supplement the broad authority to regulate vehicles on public roads that is currently held by the Department of Transportation.

I commend Secretary Duffy and his team at the Department for their early and significant attention on autonomous vehicles. In April, Secretary Duffy announced a new automated vehicle framework as part of his innovation agenda and has included early action items that are a welcome down payment. It is imperative this product continues, and we are optimistic that with confirmed administrators at NHTSA and FMCSA that more is yet to come.

Department of Transportation action must be paired with activity from Congress. I want to highlight a few critical policy items that are needed in Federal AV legislation or from the U.S. DOT.

First, we believe that public trust in AVs is essential to their acceptance and that

the industry must earn and maintain that trust every single day. We are an engagement-first industry and provide public education on the technology and work closely with local first responders and law enforcement.

Last year, we released the AVIA TRUST Principles, which announced industry commitments and new initiatives to build and sustain public trust in AVs. But the AV industry can't do this work alone, and the Federal Government has an important role to play in building trust in AVs, such as a rulemaking from NHTSA to require commercially deployed AVs manufacturers to develop a safety case; creation of a national AV safety data repository which houses AV incident data and allows NHTSA to share information with State transportation regulators; and a rulemaking from NHTSA to require a core set of autonomous driving system behavioral competency tests to which each AVs manufacturer would need to certify.

Second, Congress and the Department of Transportation must also modernize the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards to address requirements for manually operated driving controls and certain indicators that should not be applicable to level four or level five AVs.

Autonomous vehicles are an opportunity to reimagine what motor vehicles look like and how they are designed, paving the way for greater accessibility, safety, and social utility. AVs will be game changers for the elderly and people with disabilities.

My written testimony provides additional policy recommendations that should be included in Federal legislation.

To conclude, the AV industry is excited to get to work with members of this committee to put in place a Federal policy framework that supports American leadership. The time is short and it is now.

Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to any questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Farrah follows:]

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Mr. Fulcher. Thank you to everyone on the panel for your testimony. I will begin the questioning and recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Mr. Farrah, this question is for you, but I also want to go to Mr. Bozzella for some comments. As autonomous vehicles continue to advance, much of the testing and deployment occurs in dense urban regions. However, there is a lot of rural and remote areas, including in my State of Idaho. Most of the geography would be considered rural or remote, and that presents some unique challenges with connectivity, tracking capacity and so on, and also with road markings, which can be obscured, nonexistent in some cases.

So can you comment how the industry is working to address some of those challenges in the AV industry?

Mr. Farrah. Thank you very much for the question. I would be glad to address that.

I think the first thing to note is that, when we talk about autonomous vehicles, we are taking about level four autonomous driving systems. These are vehicles that, insofar as there is a human in the vehicle, it is merely a passenger. And one of the characteristics of a level four autonomous driving system is that it is confined to what we call an operational design domain. This is a set of safety limiting factors that really apply to where the vehicle is, what types of circumstances that it can ultimately operate in.

And so when the industry is looking to go into a new geographical area, the first thing that they do is very extensive testing and mapping to understand many of the unique characteristics of where it is they are going to operate. So this is why you see a very deliberate and steady deployment that is going on, sometimes city by city, highway by highway. We are not in a hurry to ultimately deploy these vehicles. We want to

make sure that safety is always at the forefront.

And so as we look to expand the footprint of autonomous vehicles into more geographies across the country, we need to make sure that we are taking into account the special circumstances that you know, whether it is markings, whether it is rural roads that sometimes have their challenges. Obviously, sometimes when you are operating in highways, it is different than operating in city environments. And so we have been successful with these deployments across many different modes of transportation, but we have to be sensitive to all the localities and what they have to offer.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you for that.

Mr. Bozzella, comments on that?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just to build on what Mr. Farrah just talked about, I do think it is important to recognize, when we talk about highly automated vehicles, we are also talking, in addition to level four vehicles, level three highly automated vehicles.

In this case, we do think that there are use cases that will support rural drivers and passengers who, for example, take long distances and could benefit from the hands-off, eyes-off, safe AV vehicle in a personally owned context. But what this comes down to, and I think Mr. Farrah would agree, is that we need a national framework to make sure that we are building use cases that support all consumers -- rural, suburban, and urban.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you for that.

Dr. Harkey, the vast majority of Americans are avid users of cell phones, as you know, other mobile technology. Can you share some comments on research that you might have access to on mobile phones use while driving, including texting, social media, and what are the broader safety implications of a technology enabled distracted driving?

Dr. Harkey. Yeah, we know that distracted driving is a growing problem. It is

one that the official numbers from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration are in that 3,000 to 4,000 range in terms of fatalities that have been assigned as a result of distracted driving. Our research and others have shown that the number may be as high as 10,000, and so we know this is a serious problem that needs to be addressed.

No doubt that mobile phone, that device in our hands is a big part of that and something that needs to be addressed. It has to be addressed in a couple ways. Of course, we can do as much as we can with awareness and education of the general public, and that works to some extent. But one of the things that we have seen in our research is there are some policy changes that can be implemented.

And so changing those laws from a hold and use to simply hold, it gives law enforcement greater capability to be able to actually pick out the violators of the particular law and then be able to have that adjudicated properly in the courts.

And so I think this is something that is going to be really important moving forward. It is going to be a combination of, what can we do from an awareness standpoint? What can we do from an enforcement standpoint? And more importantly as we think to the future, what can we do from a technology standpoint in the vehicle itself? There are ways that we can limit use, and I think that is going to be really, really important.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you for that.

Mr. Farrah, I don't have time for another question, but I want to just give you notice I am going to send you a written question having to do with opportunities for elderly and disabled. You touched on that. I would like to drill a little bit deeper, but I don't have time right now.

So with that, I yield it to the -- Ranking Member Schakowsky for 5 minutes.

Ms. Schakowsky. Ms. Chase, I would like to ask a few questions of you. There

are plenty more things that we could do to make auto safety, but I want to talk about some -- two at least that have already passed and yet they have not been implemented. For example, we passed kids -- what we do for kids -- kids in hot cars, we passed that. And I thought we were going to be able to save the children. So what can we do about that?

And also drunk driving. I know that is really hard, but we still haven't succeeded. So what more could we do on those two issues?

Ms. Chase. Thank you for the question, Ranking Member Schakowsky. And thank you so much for your leadership on the issue of hot cars. It is just devastating that we are still losing children who were either forgotten in the backseat, maybe they fell asleep during a family trip, or maybe they climb into a car when adults aren't looking at them. And especially at a time when this panel is talking about autonomous vehicles, surely we can get the detection systems into vehicles so that these children don't suffer, both fatalities and injuries.

So as you mentioned, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law directed the U.S. Department of Transportation to issue a final rule to have equipment in vehicles that would alert people if a child is left in a car. We have not seen action on it. And we implore this committee and Congress to continue oversight efforts so that that rule can be brought over the finish line.

Our organization has held numerous demonstrations, of which you have been a part of over the years, showing that the technology exists and works. So this is not something that a new technology has to be invented for. It is there and we need to get it into cars.

Ms. Schakowsky. We really do need to work on it, yes.

Ms. Chase. Absolutely. And then you brought up impaired driving. That is

another issue where approximately 10,000 people are being killed every year on our roadways. And again, there is technology. I personally have been in cars that have had some of the passive impaired driving technology systems. In fact, Mr. Bozzella's organization held a demonstration about a year ago, I believe, where they showed that the passive systems can detect small amounts of alcohol and prevent people from getting behind the wheel, and that is really what we need.

But until that technology is required, as required in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, there are steps that can be taken. There is a bipartisan End DWI Act, which should be enacted. And that would require all offenders have ignition interlocks in their cars if they are convicted of drunk driving. And people who have had the IIDs in their cars have admitted that it has stopped them from driving while impaired and changed their driving behaviors. And that is what really we need and want to do in terms of getting impaired drivers off the roadways.

Ms. Schakowsky. Do we need to talk to the drivers, the manufacturers to get busy on these?

Ms. Chase. Oh, absolutely. There is no reason to wait for the U.S. Department of Transportation to require these systems into cars, although we do support minimum performance standards, because we don't want a situation where some systems are underperforming when a consumer is expecting them to act a certain way. But, for example, right now there are already automatic emergency braking systems with pedestrian detection in cars, and that is not required until 2029.

So cars have the ability to be saving lives right now, and we do urge auto manufacturers to continue their work to get these systems into cars.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you so much. We can definitely do better. And I appreciate all the work that you do.

Ms. Chase. I really appreciate your work.

Ms. Schakowsky. I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you to the ranking member.

The chair recognizes the chairman of the full committee, Mr. Guthrie, for 5 minutes.

The Chair. Thank you very much. And so -- thank you for yielding.

Mr. Farrah, autonomous vehicles account and utilize AI for sensing classification, prediction, decision making. In many ways AVs present a real-world application of AI with transformative potential. One of the themes that we have had -- or the theme, I guess you want to say, defining theme of this first 6 months of most of the committee has been American global leadership in AI. Our values or China's values in AI.

Could you talk about how continued advancement in deployment of AVs can help America's global leadership in AI?

Mr. Farrah. Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the question. And thank you for all your leadership on autonomous vehicles and AI generally.

I will start by saying that I think that autonomous vehicles are a really useful example of what we can do with artificial intelligence. I think that for a lot of Americans it sometimes can be hard to conceptualize how it is that AI is going to transform our economy and contribute in many ways. And when you see this physical manifestation of AI through autonomous vehicles where people can be passengers, they can see that their goods are being safely delivered, and see that we can make huge strides on roadway safety and accessibility, these are all really wonderful things that I think that AVs can ultimately do. But I am very, very concerned that we have not had a Federal policy framework in place that is allowing the United States to globally lead, because we do know that many of our strategic competitors, including China, they are very serious about

dominating globally when it comes to both AI and on AVs. And right now, we are fighting with one hand tied behind our back.

We need to have a Federal policy framework in place that allows for private sector investment, private sector innovation in this space. And so we are very eager to work with you and members of this committee to pass AV legislation and also work with the Department of Transportation.

The Chair. Thanks. And so, Mr. Bozzella as well, and Mr. Farrah as well, so I guess to another kind of thing we have been dealing with, and being the Commerce Committee, we are the protectors of the Commerce Clause of the Constitution, but we also have the 10th Amendment of the Constitution. And so matter of fact, Mr. Fry and I were just kind of talking about just a second ago as we were talking about this, and sometimes you have to determine where it goes.

We are also a laboratory of democracy with our 50 States. And something -- when we leave a vacuum, then States try to fill that in. One is they just want to -- but to me, AVs are clearly Commerce Clause. Unless you are just going to regulate what just happens within your State, you are going to build a car in one State and it is going to travel to another. This obviously needs to have a national standard.

So the lack of that puts pressure on us, and the States put pressure on us by doing it themselves, because if you are not going to do it, we are. And that is what we have to be mindful of.

So Mr. Bozzella first and then Mr. Farrah. Can you outline the major trends you are seeing in State-level AV legislation, explain how inconsistent State laws -- or a patchwork of State laws that they are inconsistent with each other -- can impede safe nationwide deployment and NHTSA's role in regulating motor vehicle safety?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes, Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for the question.

You know, we just heard an important dialogue between Ranking Member Schakowsky and Ms. Chase about the importance of Federal motor vehicle standards on vehicle equipment. That is precisely the challenge in the AV space that we are facing today. A customer in an AV should be able to understand that that vehicle that they purchase or that they lease or that they are in is the same vehicle going from State to State and it works the same way.

What we are seeing in States is, as you said, nature abhors a vacuum. States are actually considering and putting in place equipment requirements for AVs. This is clearly the -- the purview of the Federal Government, then the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards existed, those States would be clearly preempted from doing so.

And so I think the most important thing that this committee needs to consider as it works on this legislation is the preemptive importance of having a robust AV policy at the Federal level that is focused on safety. So examples. In California right now, four different equipment standards are being considered by the Department of Motor Vehicles in California that would be imposed on vehicles. This is the vacuum that has to be filled by the Federal Government.

The Chair. Thank you.

Mr. Farrah?

Mr. Farrah. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

I would say that it is important to emphasize here that there is a very strong role in autonomous vehicle regulation for State governments. There is a very, very strong role for the Federal Government. What is most important is that each stay in their respective swim lanes.

You have 26 States that have passed autonomous vehicle deployment statutes, accounting for more than 57 percent of the population. Those are a welcomed trend.

We have worked diligently over the course of the last 10 or so years to put those in place. But they are speaking narrowly to State issues. They are authorizing level four, level five AVs on the roads. They are speaking to insurance minimum requirements. They are speaking to law enforcement and first responder engagement. But the Federal Government needs to be the one speaking to vehicle design, construction, and performance.

And to Mr. Bozzella's point, we are seeing States creep in, especially on vehicle design issues. That is not appropriate. That is why we need the Federal Government to step in. That is why we need Congress to ultimately pass a Federal AV statute.

The Chair. Thank you, Mr. Farrah.

And I will yield back. My time has expired.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The chairman now recognizes the ranking member, Mr. Pallone, for 5 minutes.

Mr. Pallone. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Protecting American consumers by ensuring the safety of the products they buy, the websites they visit, and the cars they drive is the essential responsibility of this subcommittee. Helping NHTSA, our Nation's auto safety regulator, to fulfill its mission is a key part of this subcommittee's work.

Now, there have been reports that as much as 35 percent of NHTSA's expert staff have been laid off or otherwise left the agency this year. So I am concerned that this loss of expertise, along with the Trump administration's proposed reallocation of resources at NHTSA, will make it impossible for NHTSA to adopt the safety rules that Congress has mandated and do other work crucial to fulfill its mission to ensure the safety of Americans on the roads today.

So I have two questions, both of Ms. Chase. First, do you share my concerns,

and just feel free to elaborate, if you will? But I do have a second question.

Ms. Chase. Thank you for the question.

As a fellow New Jerseyan, I appreciate talking with you today. And I just want to say it is very interesting that one commonality of all of the panelist ' testimony, written testimony that is, is that we have all called upon NHTSA to do more work. And yet as you rightly point out, there has been a significant reduction in the workforce and some very important talent has been lost. And I am very concerned that this is not only a short-term concern, but it will have long-lasting ramifications in terms of attracting talent at a time when cars are getting more complex.

We need to have the expertise at this agency which is charged so importantly with protecting all road users. They need to have sufficient resources and sufficient talent to make sure that our roadways are safe for everyone. So I absolutely share your concern.

Mr. Pallone. Oh, I appreciate that. You know, over the years -- not to take away from this issue -- you know, we deal with the healthcare system. And I remember for the first, you know, maybe 20 years that I was here, I hear from everybody. It wasn't just a Republican-Democrat thing, you know. Nursing homes would come in and doctors would come in, and they would say, oh, we can do more with the healthcare system and, you know, help more people and provide more services with less -- you know, with less money. And I would say, okay, but at some point that is not going to be true anymore. And I think we have reached that point in the healthcare system.

And I think, generally speaking, you know, you can't give an agency more work or provide more patients or provide more services and then give them less money; it just doesn't work. Or less staff; it just doesn't work.

But let me get to my next question. NHTSA's 5-star safety rating system, also known as the New Car Assessment Program, or NCAP, is intended to help consumers

compare the safety of vehicles when they shop. Now, while the rating system has been updated in recent years, there is general agreement that the ratings have become woefully outdated and we have fallen behind other countries.

So, Ms. Chase, is the current 5-star rating -- safety rating system working for consumers, and what should NHTSA do to make sure that the 5-star safety rating program is helpful to consumers who want to understand and compare the safety features of different cars? If you would.

Ms. Chase. Thank you for the question.

This actually is a place where the United States has fallen behind other countries, which is very shameful because we, the United States, started this program. In fact, one of my board members, Joan Claybrook, when she was the head of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, was instrumental in starting the NCAP program, but it has devolved over the years and it now really has become like a participation award, if you will.

We have come -- fallen subject to starflation, if you will, where everyone gets five stars. It is like Oprah, you get five stars, you get five stars. And we need to rein that in. There needs to be delineation so that a consumer knows, if that person goes into a car and, as I mentioned earlier, expends one of the biggest parts of their family budget and wants a safe car, they know that five stars means something.

And in the absence of NCAP stepping up, I have to say the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety has done an exceptional job in terms of rating and crashing vehicles so that consumers can be informed. But this should be the role of our government and of the agency that is NHTSA.

Mr. Pallone. No, I appreciate that. And, you know, I think that more than any other area that I can think of that we have jurisdiction over, when you deal with

automobiles, the idea of consumers', you know, right to know and their ability to shop and make decisions if you provide them with information, you know, shopping for a car I think is -- this is all very important, so that is why I appreciate what you said. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you to the ranking member.

The chair now recognizes Representative Harshbarger for 5 minutes.

Mrs. Harshbarger. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the witnesses here today.

I want to start with you, Mr. Bozzella. In the past decade or so, we -- new vehicles have been equipped with advanced driver assistant technology called ADAS, which is designed to prevent deadly crashes. But while it can improve vehicle safety, it is important that these safety features work, not only when the vehicle comes off the assembly line, but for the life of the vehicle.

So do drivers know if the ADAS system in their vehicle is fully functional and properly calibrated?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes. Thank you. This is a very important question about advanced safety systems like ADAS. I want to make a very important point in the outset. ADAS systems are not autonomous driving systems. The driver must be fully attentive and fully in control at all times. So ADAS is there to aid the driver, support the driver, and provide assistance. So that is point number one.

Point number two, we work on these systems, the durability of these systems, and the effect of these systems, and warrant these systems like we do for every other part of the car. So it is really important that they work and they work all the time.

And the last point I would make about ADAS is, when you build an ADAS vehicle that combines two different types of technologies, like adaptive cruise control and sort of

lane centering or lane keeping, it is also important that we monitor the driver and make sure the driver is attentive. Those systems all do work and need to work over the life of the vehicle.

Mrs. Harshbarger. Okay. So my understanding is that there isn't a universal way for vehicle owners to see that that system is working properly. Should there be a standardized maybe EML on vehicles so owners will know that their system is functioning properly?

Mr. Bozzella. So I would love to learn more about your concern. The vehicles that I am familiar with make the customer aware of when the system is working and when it is not, when it is on and when it is off. I do think it is important that we educate customers about how the systems work and what their limitations are. So I do think education is an important part of this.

Mrs. Harshbarger. Do the automakers provide independent automotive businesses with information on how to maintain that ADAS functionality?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes. This is critically important. The manufacturers provide all of the data necessary to diagnose and repair vehicles to everyone, both dealers as well as independent repair shops.

Mrs. Harshbarger. Okay. That was my next question.

Mr. Bozzella. Sorry.

Mrs. Harshbarger. That is great. No, you answered it. You saved me 3 seconds.

You mentioned how vehicle manufacturers need to jump through two, three, four hoops when it comes to complying with the mission requirements. So explain just very briefly how cafe standards, which benefit smaller cars, how they can actually hinder safety standards.

RPTR MCGHEE

EDTR SECKMAN

[11:02 a.m.]

Mr. Bozzella. The challenge with emissions and fuel economy regulations is we have four different agencies and seven different rules regulating one vehicle, and so there is an enormous amount of confusion and waste in the system that doesn't produce emissions benefits, and so that is really the biggest challenge. For the most part, manufacturers can achieve both more safety and more fuel efficiency at the same time. The key is aligning all of the agencies on one national program.

Mrs. Harshberger. Man, I know what you are talking about when it comes to agencies.

Mr. Farrah, I have got about a minute left. I keep reading reports hailing AVs for their safety benefits, but you mentioned how some of NHTSA's safety requirements should be modified or removed. So can you briefly clarify in more detail which safety requirements need to be changed for AVs and how will that not jeopardize patient -- passenger safety or patient safety?

Mr. Farrah. Congresswoman, thank you very much for the question. I appreciate it.

I will say a couple of pieces. I will say the first thing to note is, when we all get in our cars and we are leaving at the end of the day, if you look around, you see all these things that are put around you. They are put there because, to date, a human has been the one driving a vehicle, and so our vehicles are all very human-centric. And why we have a steering wheel and a brake pedal and a rearview mirror in certain places, and whatnot, it is there to help you to be able to safely operate the vehicle.

But, if you step back and think, "Okay, what happens in a world where an autonomous driving system can do all the driving," you would design the vehicle in an entirely different way. We need to make sure that we are modernizing the rules that NHTSA has in place to account for that situation where we are now going to have this autonomous driving system that will ultimately do the driving. It is going to help us to make vehicles more accessible, make them more safe in the future, and so this is an exciting opportunity we can speak to that in Federal AV legislation.

Mrs. Harshberger. That is good because I drive back and forth to D.C., and it is 6 hours.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Harshbarger.

The chair now recognizes Representative Castor for 5 minutes.

Ms. Castor. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today. Automobile safety touches everyone, everyone across the country. It is so important. And, unfortunately, I represent a community where it is actually one of the most deadly places in the country to be a pedestrian. On average, at least one person walking and one person biking are involved in a crash every day with many resulting in serious injury or death. This is a costly and tragic problem.

In fact, my hometown newspaper, the Tampa Bay Times, has really been pressing the issue. They wrote earlier this year the Tampa Bay metro area has been one of the most dangerous places to walk in the United States. A pedestrian is far likelier to die in Tampa Bay than in much -- the much busier, much larger New York City, three times as likely when accounting for the Big Apple's larger population -- three times. In a typical year in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties, drivers hit more than 1,000 pedestrians. About 100 of them die.

Thank you, Ms. Chase, for recognizing that these are all individuals and not just statistics. It is a stark reminder that pedestrians stand little chance when things go wrong.

Now, we tried to do some things in the bipartisan infrastructure law. We sent large grants back home to address the backlog of safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, the way we develop our roadways. Under the Biden administration, NHTSA started a substantial number of safety rulemakings and finalized several rules that will save lives, but I share the concern that Ranking Member Pallone raised that you confirmed, Ms. Chase, that these arbitrary cuts and taking the cops off the beat, firing experts, delaying rulemakings is not going to do anything to help save lives, ultimately.

But we benefit back home from the expertise. At the University of South Florida, we have a center for urban transportation research. They have been -- they do a lot on safety practices, and they highlighted to me the most important things we can do are technological and behavioral changes. I think distracted driving right now is such a problem. Everywhere you go, people are -- you look at -- I often count cars of people that are on their phones as they drive.

Now, we have directed NHTSA to address this, but where are we with this, Ms. Chase? Where are they?

Ms. Chase. Thank you for your question, and I just want to commend you for bringing up pedestrian safety. Going for a walk should not mean a death sentence, and that is what is happening in our sidewalks and roadways right now, and it doesn't have to be. There is technology available, automatic emergency braking with pedestrian detection that is in some cars and should be in all new cars that prevents people from getting killed.

Additionally, cars can be designed so that they are more forgiving if they are in a

crash with a pedestrian so that the vehicle absorbs the energy, instead of the person, who is obviously more vulnerable.

But, in terms of your question of where are we, NHTSA is behind. NHTSA needs more resources to bring needed rulemakings over the finish line in a very -- in a number of areas, and I would like to focus specifically on advanced driver assistance systems, which Mr. Bozzella brought up. These are systems that we know, according to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, can reduce crashes, and they can reduce crashes whether someone is distracted, impaired, drowsy. And all of these things are happening behind the wheel.

So, if a car -- if a driver, you know, falls prey to one of these characteristics, the vehicle can take over. It can brake. It can center a lane. It can capture a blind spot and take action so that a bicyclist or a pedestrian isn't hit. So we really need NHTSA to get going on these rulemakings and --

Ms. Castor. Didn't NHTSA finalize a rule in 2024 requiring automatic emergency braking on all new cars sold after September 2029? I note that it is being challenged in the courts by the Alliance for Automotive Innovation.

Dr. Harkey, is the institute involved in that litigation?

Dr. Harkey. No, we are not directly involved in that litigation. Our role in AV testing and evaluation is strictly to figure out, are these systems performing at a level that will prevent the kind of harm, both for vehicle to vehicle incidents as well as vehicle to pedestrian and now moving into vehicle to bicyclists. So we are looking at all aspects of that.

Ms. Castor. And does your data show that that would save lives, that rule on braking being integrated into vehicles?

Dr. Harkey. What our data shows is that the systems that have been built are

resulting in a 50 percent reduction in front-to-rear vehicle-to-vehicle strikes and a 27 percent reduction in vehicle-to-pedestrian strikes currently, and those are for lower speeds. Our most recent testing, we have now increased those speeds, increased the number of targets that they must address, and so -- and we are seeing better performance from the automakers. And so the auto industry is working hard to continue to improve performance with respect to those systems, and we are going to see them get better and better over time.

Ms. Castor. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you to Representative Castor.

Representative Obernolte is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Obernolte. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Farrah, I was interested in your discussion with Chairman Guthrie about the fact that 26 different States have already created regulation of autonomous vehicles, and you stated that it is important that regulation of AVs be a partnership between Federal regulation and State regulation and that each entity needs to stay in its lane. And I was struck by the fact that we have a very similar situation that has developed with respect to artificial intelligence in general. I chaired the House AI Task Force, and we included in our task force report an entire chapter on the issue of preemption because this balance of regulation is so important. So I wanted to ask specifically about something that we are considering right now in Congress, which is a temporary moratorium on State regulation of AI. And we think that that is necessary to avoid 50 different State regulators going in 50 different directions on something that is clearly interstate commerce. And, very similar to AV, we think that ultimately regulation of AI will require a partnership between Federal and State regulation.

In your opinion, I mean, that moratorium is specifically for AI. So general

purpose regulation of AVs, as long as it doesn't specifically touch AI, should be exempted. Do you see the moratorium as a positive or a negative to the development and adoption of AVs?

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, thank you very much for the question. We have obviously been close observers of that discussion on the moratorium, and there is a discussion going on in the Senate as we speak. And so what I can say is that our read of the rule of construction related to that moratorium would preserve the State AV deployment statutes that would advance the safe operation of autonomous vehicles on our roads.

Our organization has worked very diligently for about a decade to pass the 26 AV deployment statutes. We want to make sure they remain in place because, as you say, there is a really excellent opportunity here for partnership, for federalism to exist, where States are having a lot of jurisdiction around specifically authorizing vehicles on the roads, regulating things that are within their purview, but the fact of the matter is the Federal Government has not caught up. They are not doing what is needed around vehicle design, construction, and performance. That is what we are looking for.

Mr. Obernolte. Right. I would say a similar situation exists with respect to AI in general, and we are going to try to fix both of those things here.

Another question for you. In your testimony, I was very interested when you talked about the fact that public trust is going to be essential for the success of AVs and all of the benefits that that technology can bring to our society, particularly with respect to lowering accident rates. And you talked about some things like the creation of safety data, repositories, and behavioral competency tests that can enhance public trust, but I am wondering if the problem isn't much bigger than that.

And the reason why I say that is that, when there is a bad vehicle accident, locally

you might see something about it on the local news, but when there is one accident in a Tesla on auto pilot in Florida, we hear about it in California. So, you know, the public has adopted this risk model with AVs that is very dissimilar to the risk model that they accept when they drive their own vehicle on a highway, and it would seem to me, as a society, from a logical standpoint, as soon as the safety level of AVs exceeds the safety level generally of human piloted vehicles, we ought to celebrate that as a success. But, instead, you know, the attitude is that one accident is too many, and someone must be at fault, and it must be fixed. So how do we reconcile those two different risk models? Because it seems to be like that is a lot more critical than the other things you mentioned.

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, I think you really touched on an important issue, and we are very eyes wide open about the reality that this is a new technology. It is something that most Americans have not had the opportunity to experience. That is going to -- increasingly that they will have access to this in the coming years, but this is something that is very new and fresh to a lot of people. They have a lot of questions. It is why I said in my opening statement we are an engagement-first industry. We want to get out and talk to first responders, talk to mayors, talk to local community members, talk to citizen groups, explain who we are, explain what the technology can do, what the safety benefits are, the accessibility benefits, and so we need to continue to lead on that public education piece of everything, and so that is just a reality of what is going to be the case. And so I think that it is very clear that we need to do more to explain this, but I also think that Congress can be a partner to all of us in trying to really pursue more public trust.

Mr. Obernolte. I would agree.

Dr. Harkey, I just have a few seconds here, but we are going to have a problem parceling out liability for accidents when autonomous vehicles are involved. What is the

current thinking on how we do that? Because it is a very complex topic.

Dr. Harkey. It is a complex topic, and I am not sure we have the answers yet. I don't know until we actually get cases in the courts and actually see the litigation to understand how that is going to be parsed out and where it is going to fall in terms of the vehicle manufacturer, the insurer that is responsible, or the particular driver that owns the vehicle. I think all are going to be part of those lawsuits, obviously, and so we just don't know the answers as to how that litigation is going to play out at this time.

Mr. Obernolte. Right. Well, I wonder if Congress could be part of that solution rather than leaving it to rooms full of lawyers. Thank you very much for your testimony.

I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Obernolte.

The chair now recognizes Representative Soto for 5 minutes.

Mr. Soto. Well, jeez, talking about Florida and lawyers? That is like a double threat, sir. I ought to get our chair down here to talk about Florida pride. I know Gus Bilirakis and my other two Floridians on the committee would be coming to my aid on this.

In all seriousness, we know autonomous vehicles, crash-avoidance systems continue to evolve across America. Safety, mobility for -- I think about young people, seniors, folks with disabilities, what this means for them. Central Florida has been a big part of this. We have helped develop LiDAR, one of the redundancy systems for autonomous vehicles. We have the longest running autonomous public transit, Beep, way back in 2019. Just shows you how new this technology is in Lake Nona in our district, and then SunTrax, which is a partnership with the Florida Department of Transportation for autonomous commercial vehicles.

You know, when we look at fast growing central Florida, we see I-4 expansions we

are working on, turnpike, Poinciana Parkway, SunRail, Brightline, expansions to help with commuter rail and high-speed rail, electric links buses; and, when you see these autonomous vehicles that last mile or that last few miles, it is going to play a critical role in getting folks where they need to go.

I know, having worked with Beep on, first, their first NHTSA waiver, now their second one, we are essentially in a waiver system right now, which is kind of gray, right? It doesn't really help too much when we are trying to do autonomous vehicles that there is a lack of rules and an inaction by Congress. So I am hopeful that this committee will move on this.

Contrast that to FAA rules on eVTOLs, otherwise known as flying cars, we are actually doing a vertical eVTOL flying car area for Orlando International Airport because that rulemaking came out. But, as far as I could see it, we had NHTSA rolled out their first national framework in December 20th under the Biden administration that had a proposed voluntary view in reporting. We saw, about 5 months later, the Trump administration came out with a second framework that incorporated those safety aspects and added in innovation and commercial deployment, but I have got to say it is still a little light, right? It is not really particularly substantive.

Mr. Farrah, you know, we haven't seen a lot of movement on rulemaking, and you add in the 50 percent of the autonomous vehicle department being axed under DOGE. How is NHTSA doing on rulemaking right now? It has been slow, right?

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, thank you very much for the question, and I wanted to really make a point of commenting on something you talked about, which really the opportunity especially around shared mobility for the elderly and people with disabilities, and that is really an opportunity I think for all of us in front of it. And, obviously, Florida has been a national leader when it comes to regulation for a very long time.

Mr. Soto. But how is NHTSA doing? Are they slow? Is the cuts affecting them?

Mr. Farrah. I think, early days, we have seen some very encouraging signs. Obviously, we are only a handful of months here into the administration. We have seen Secretary Duffy talk about his Federal framework and the need to take action there. We are hopeful that, with a confirmed NHTSA Administrator and a confirmed Administrator from CSA, we will see additional activity, but I really think it underscores the need for this committee to be acting on Federal AV legislation to give those nudges to the Department of Transportation.

Mr. Soto. Do they have authorization already to do regulation on AVs under their existing authority?

Mr. Farrah. NHTSA and the Department of Transportation has a tremendous amount of latitude to initiate new rulemakings. That said, they have been slow to do it historically, and I think --

Mr. Soto. So they could. Thank you so much.

Mr. Bozzella, tariffs. Right? We saw 10 percent across the board, 50 percent on steel and aluminum. We know it is raising the prices of vehicles. Is it also affecting innovation in areas like autonomous vehicles?

Mr. Bozzella. It could. And really it depends on how long this environment lasts and to what -- and how expansive it is, but, certainly, with regard to not only tariffs, import tariffs, but also export controls, those types of policies could affect the pace of innovation.

Mr. Soto. And we already saw USMCA. We had established a framework. We even lifted the percentage that it needs to be built in the United States for it to be an American car, and so how are automakers feeling right now in the certainty of their

business?

Mr. Bozzella. Yeah. So -- and Congresswoman Dingell touched on this in her opening remarks. I mean, the industry does best with certainty, where we have clear running rules, and we know what those rules are, and we adjust to manage them. So what we are hopeful of is that these rules will be clarified, that negotiations will be completed, and we will understand what the rules are; we will make the adjustments necessary, and we will move forward. That is what we need is the clarity to make the adjustments.

Mr. Soto. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I wanted to submit the Specialty Equipment Marketing -- Market Association, SEMA's letter in support of the efforts we are doing here today.

Mr. Fulcher. Sorry, repeat that, Mr. Soto.

Mr. Soto. The Special Equipment Market Association. It is actually a courtesy to Ms. Harshbarger.

Mr. Fulcher. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

******** COMMITTEE INSERT ********

Mr. Soto. I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Soto.

Representative Fry, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Fry. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Dr. Harkey, in your testimony, you reference international trends, and in terms of crash prevention and vehicle safety, what countries have good models that we should look at when it comes to that?

Dr. Harkey. Thank you for the question. It is a great question. Trying to parse out what makes other countries better than us is sometimes a challenge, but there is some themes that are there. The first is that you hear a few of us talk about is systemic approach to safety that has been integrated into all elements of government and a number of countries. And so, whether it is Sweden, the Netherlands, there are a number of countries where they have done this, and they have done it well.

You know, we adopted the safe system approach as part of the National Roadway Safety Strategy, the USDOT did back in 2022, but we have failed to implement it in this country. And so it is an example, one example of something that happens in other countries that we are not doing here. And I actually do think that Congress could help encourage the USDOT to do that and provide more support for them to be able to do that at the State level, at the local level.

Culture is also a big thing. You do not see impaired driving problems in other countries the way that we have those here, and so this is where technology and vehicles like passive alcohol detection can help address those problems moving forward, and we need to be thinking about how technology can help.

Technology on the other side, the other thing I would say is action in these countries to do things like speed safety cameras is very aggressive, and speed is a huge problem. It is more than a quarter of the fatalities in this country, and so that is another area where you see that.

And then the final thing I would say about what is happening in these other countries is policy. They have the ability, because they are much smaller than we are, they have the ability to federalize and put policies in place that go across the entire country, and it is easy for them to do that. We still have States that are putting policies in, but we can encourage things at the Federal level for States to do and incentivize things at the Federal level for States to do to address the risky behaviors that you see on our roadways.

Mr. Fry. Thank you for that. In your written testimony, you talked about just a second ago as well, you talked about overreliance on automation systems becoming a problem. What does your data show about how consumers interpret features like lane keeping or adaptive cruise control?

Dr. Harkey. So we -- our work on those systems has generally been on the performance side in terms of how well those systems work with respect to keeping the driver in their lanes or adjusting the throttle and braking and keeping them out of crashes. What we are seeing in terms of our research is, when we survey drivers on the use of these systems and their understanding of what these systems can do, the thing that is the most frightening about the partial automation systems is that the lack of understanding, as was referred to earlier, that these systems are not self-driving. The drivers are interpreting these in some cases to be self-driving systems, and that is where you get into the overreliance problem. And so we need to do a better job, NHTSA needs to do a better job of helping get drivers to understand what these systems are and, more

importantly, what they are not.

Mr. Fry. Yeah, what their limitations are. That is kind of important. Mr. Farrah, thank you.

Dr. Harkey, I appreciate your testimony. In your view, what is the most realistic timeline for level 4 autonomous vehicles to be deployed at scale in urban developments and what factors increase or decrease that timeline?

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, thank you for much for the question. Level 4 autonomous vehicles are here. Our members have driven more than 145 million autonomous miles on U.S. public roads. That is ever increasing. And so what you are seeing is different types of autonomous vehicles are being deployed in different fashions. There are many robo taxis that are being deployed in various U.S. cities, and so that will likely increase over the course of the next several years, and so I anticipate that, as you see more cities having autonomous vehicles deployed, you also see the footprint of those vehicles expanding out into more suburban areas and hopefully then rural areas, and then obviously you see autonomous trucking, which is a huge aspect of the autonomous vehicle industry, which is moving cargo today across different parts of the southwest, southeast United States.

Mr. Fry. You spoke about AV accessibility, and I think chairman actually was going to go on this before he ran out of time, but regarding elderly people and people with disabilities, can you give some concrete examples of where AVs have closed that gap or where technology shows the most promise?

Mr. Farrah. Absolutely. And I will say, Congressman, my grandmother is going to turn 95 years old on Saturday, and so I have watched as she --

Mr. Fry. You better there be for the birthday.

Mr. Farrah. As she has gotten older, I have seen her independence wane. I

have seen her not have the opportunities, and thankfully, she has a very strong family that is able to take her to things, but not every American has that. We need to find a way to have people be able to get to jobs more easily, get to social settings more easily. We have seen a lot of the negative effects of that, and so autonomous vehicles can drive down the cost of transportation, make it so that ownership of vehicles is not as necessary. You have that shared mobility. You have ride share that can ultimately help. And so the elderly in the United States are really going to be one of the main beneficiaries of this technology.

Mr. Fry. I see the hammer has come down. My time has expired, but thank you guys for your testimony.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Fry.

Representative Trahan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. Trahan. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is no secret that modern automobiles have become computers on wheels powered by millions of lines of code and outfitted with hundreds of sensors. Today's cars are smart. But, just like any other computer system, they carry tremendous privacy and security risks. On a single ride to the grocery store, the average car might collect real-time data on a driver's location, detailed information on their driving habits, even physical information like the driver's height and weight. It is clear from some of this data can help make our roads safer, and I am certain it often does. But, without guardrails, this data can be secretly transferred to third parties for purposes that are wholly inconsistent with the driver's understanding or expectations.

Like most Americans, I feel strongly about the need to control my data. The suspect in the recent shooting deaths of Minnesota State Representative Melissa Hortman and her husband had in his position a list of so-called people search websites.

Reports suggest that he may have used these sites to determine his victims' home addresses. The harrowing ordeal has renewed calls for privacy protections, especially the right to be deleted, an idea that I have championed in legislation like the Delete Act.

So, Mr. Bozzella, more and more car companies are collecting sensitive data, tracking visits to psychologists, places of worship, even revealing when Americans cross State lines to seek abortion care. Alarmingly, an investigation by Senator Wyden last year found that several car companies do not require a warrant before they turn over location data to law enforcement. He also found that several car companies sold data to data brokers, some for pennies on the dollar. So what responsibilities do you believe car companies have to protect the privacy of vehicle owners, including handling requests from law enforcement and the sale of consumer data?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes. This is a very, very important issue for the reasons you mentioned. These are computers on wheels. They collect this data for very important critical and necessary reasons. Much of this data is used to manage the safety systems of the vehicle, for example. The biometric data that you mentioned, my weight, for example, indicates the power of the air bag, for example. Telematics data allows a first responder to know where my car is, even if I can't respond to a phone call. So these are important things.

Now, manufacturers are responsible. We have, since 2014, had privacy principles, voluntarily privacy principles, which were groundbreaking at the time, where companies committed to protect the data of their customers, especially this sensitive data. Context is important. Transparency is important. And consent is important. Those principles are enforceable by the Federal Trade Commission. We expect our members will follow them, and there are consequences when they don't.

Mrs. Trahan. I appreciate that.

Mr. Bozzella. Last point, we need a Federal privacy law.

Mrs. Trahan. I couldn't agree with you more. I couldn't agree with you more, and I am happy that the principles included data minimization, transparency, and choice. Now, while today's computers are moving -- I mean while today's cars are moving computers, I think it is fair to call autonomous vehicles moving super computers. AVs rely on abundance of external sensors to operate safely and effectively, including LiDAR, radars, and cameras. And these sensors introduce novel privacy concerns to top the risks to individuals present in today's car. The continuous video feeds collected by AVs could in theory be fed into a larger centralized network alongside other data sources. To be blunt, I am concerned that we could create a mobile surveillance data if we aren't careful.

Mr. Farrah, in your testimony, you state that Congress should include in any comprehensive legislation regulating AVs language, quote, requiring AV manufacturers to develop cybersecurity and privacy plans for their technologies. Do you believe that a robust AV privacy plan must include data minimization, transparency, and consumer control?

Mr. Farrah. Congresswoman, thank you very much for the question, and I share a lot of the feedback that you received from Mr. Bozzella. I would say that we very much want to be a part of a Federal data privacy dialogue that is going to go on. I share Mr. Bozzella's views on that, and so I think that we need to make sure that we are not singling out autonomous vehicles. There are many concerns out there in terms of data and use of a lot of different type of sensors on vehicles, and so we want to be part of that conversation.

Mrs. Trahan. Great. Thank you so much. It is clear that this committee should be working in a bipartisan fashion on comprehensive privacy legislation that

covers every sector, including AVs, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on that. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Trahan.

Representative Mullin, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Mullin. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

As I alluded to earlier, I truly believe that advanced driver assistance systems and autonomous vehicles will one day dramatically reduce crashes and traffic deaths, and I agree that we need to innovate and move quickly to realize those safety benefits. As I have discussed both publicly and privately, we must ensure that emerging vehicle technologies are actually delivering on their promise to reduce crashes and save lives. Right now, we are flying blind.

As NHTSA itself has explained, we aren't able to evaluate relative safety performance of AVs or how they interact with road users because we don't have the data. As Ms. Chase mentioned in her testimony, there have been numerous incidents in and around my district including situations where AVs enter construction zones, sped through crosswalks, drove erratically, blocked traffic and transit lanes, and interfered with first responders, including blocking the path of fire trucks. But we simply don't know the extent of the problems.

Now, I get it. I understand this technology is in its early stages and will keep getting better over time. But how will we know when it is better? These are exactly the kinds of situations that make the case for stronger oversight and standardized reporting.

I have been encouraged by recent conversations with industry leaders, including many represented here today. There is a growing agreement that more transparency

around this potentially transformative technology is both necessary and responsible. And I know human drivers can be erratic, too. So let's make sure we have the data so we can be assured that AVs are performing safely or maybe even more safely than humans. We just don't know yet.

So, Mr. Farrah, you mentioned in your testimony that AVs have now driven, I believe the number was 145 million miles in the U.S., although it is important to note for comparison that Californians alone drove 340 billion miles every year. So we need to collect much more data to draw any conclusions. But could you tell me who is collecting and validating AV driving data right now?

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, thank you very much for the question. Right now, the autonomous vehicle industry is doing data reporting under the standing general order that NHTSA is collecting information, so we are providing information about AV incidents to NHTSA at the Federal level. That information is publicly shared on the website, and there is, you know, obviously a robust amount of information there. Sometimes it gets misunderstood and needs to be cleaned up. We need to make sure we don't have duplication.

But what we have said as an industry is let's step back from the standing general order. Let's put in statute a national AV safety data repository that will capture that AV incident data. Let's improve it, and let's make State regulators a part of the process because when we -- in our travels to various State capitals, many State departments of transportation, departments of motor vehicles, they want to be a part of the equation. They want to get more information from the Federal level. And so what we have said is let's share that information out through this national AV safety data repository. Let's allow that information to be shared with relevant State regulators about incidents in their district, and so that is something we would be very eager to work with you and your

office on.

Mr. Mullin. I am encouraged to hear about this progress, and I understand that NHTSA collects data about collisions, but beyond that, is there any requirement to report vehicle miles traveled, for example, VMT, or how AVs are performing in complex high-risk environments like near schools and work zones or around first responders, for example?

Mr. Farrah. The incident data that is shared via the standing general order right now does talk about a lot of -- any incidents that are occurring. In terms of vehicle miles traveled, that is something that we would support the AV safety data repository expanding to. I think that is a relevant point. Obviously, we as an industry have taken that on in terms of producing the data point that you mentioned around 145 million miles, but that is something that we would very much like to do that in partnership with our regulator.

Mr. Mullin. And let me just emphasize, I have been heartened by the discussions I have had with industry leaders, including AVIA. Do you still agree, though, that there is a need for more transparency in this arena?

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, right now, there is more data known about autonomous vehicles than any other type of vehicle that is on our public roads, and so, if you combine what is available at the Federal level in conjunction, obviously, in your home State of California -- the Department of Motor Vehicles is a very robust regulator. The CPUC in California for fared passenger service is a robust regulator. So there is a tremendous amount of data that is available, and it is providing a lot of great insights about the safety record of autonomous vehicles, which is extraordinary, and so we need to find ways to make sure that that is more easily consumable, avoid some of the duplication that is out there, make sure that we are putting this in a spot where people can easily understand this because we want public trust in autonomous vehicles. We

know that goes hand in hand with their deployment, and we are very committed to that.

Mr. Mullin. Thank you for that.

I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Mullin.

Representative Dingell, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. Dingell. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I guess I am glad that all my colleagues are focused on autonomous vehicles. So I am going to submit questions for the record. But, on top of everything my colleague just said, I hope everybody understands China is collecting data right now and using it against us. And some day we are going to do something about it.

But, having made that, Mr. Bozzella, I want to start by touching on consumer safety, specifically on how crash test standards are failing women. We know that today's crash test dummies still don't reflect the real-world risks women face in car crashes. Crash test dummies used in U.S. safety tests are still largely modeled after the average male from the 1970s, and I don't even look like my colleague Rep. Mullin today, even though women are 73 percent more likely to be injured in frontal crashes. This doesn't seem to be a technology problem. Advanced female crash test dummies exist and are being used in other countries.

It seems it may be a regulatory and implementation problem. And, while bipartisan legislation has been introduced to require NHTSA to adopt the modern female test dummy, experts argue that NHTSA already has the authority to act, but they are not.

So, Mr. Bozzella, given that NHTSA has not yet incorporated a modern female crash dummy into its testing, can you speak to what the auto industry is doing to close that gap and ensure vehicles are safe for all drivers?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes. Thank you, Congresswoman Dingell. First of all, every

driver, every passenger is entitled to the same safety. Every human, period, paragraph. And we absolutely have to have a regulatory system and a product development system and a research and development system that recognizes and respects that.

Now, what we are doing already as an industry is we continue to advance crash worthiness, and we continue to advance air bag technologies and seat belt and restraint technologies. That is going well. Here is a place where we can -- and, by the way, there is work being done on advanced dummies, as you recognize. But, today, NHTSA does not test its current female dummies in every driver position that it tests male dummies. Why is that? We wrote a letter this week to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration asking that question. I think it is very important that, in their rule test, in their FMVSS testing, and in their end cap testing, that they do so.

Mrs. Dingell. I am going to send you more questions on that so we get you on the record, but I also want to talk about CAFE standards because nobody else has yet. Today's vehicles are much cleaner and more efficient than those of yesterday, and that is not by accident. That is because of decades of innovation and smart regulation. There is still more work to do if we are serious about reducing emissions, protecting public health, and keeping our auto industry globally competitive.

What the auto industry needs now more than anything, though, is certainty. Certainty is how we can support long-term investment, protect jobs, and stay competitive. To do that, we need to bring all the stakeholders to the table, set fuel economy standards that are forward looking but also practical and achievable. Any future standards must push innovation, protect workers, and give manufacturers the predictability they need to plan for the future.

But, as we sit here today, the Department of Transportation is planning to reset these CAFE standards, potentially -- I am afraid likely -- taking us backwards, while also

redirecting resources away from the fuel economy rulemakings. At the same time, my Republican colleagues are also trying to eliminate penalties for failing to comply with these standards and removing any real enforcement mechanism from the equation.

Mr. Bozzella, how do we expect U.S. automakers to lead in a competitive global market if we keep changing the rules? What does this uncertainty do to the long-term planning and investment needed to stay ahead?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes. It is very important that we have one set of aligned standards for vehicle emissions and fuel economy going forward. I said earlier we have four different agencies -- three at the Federal level, one at the State level -- with seven different regulations regulating one tailpipe. This is very challenging. And, frankly, it produces no incremental benefit. So the first thing we have to do is get alignment.

The second thing -- and I agree with your comment that we have to have balanced achievable standards that reflect market conditions and keep us moving forward. That is the place we need to be, and that is the auto industry's ambition. We are actually heartened by the initial dialogue that we have had with the Department of Transportation in recent weeks because we do think that there is a recognition that we do have to have a balanced standard.

Let's be honest: The market for electric vehicles is not what we thought it was going -- today -- what we thought it was going to be a few years ago when very, very aggressive standards were set. Adjustments should be made. They need to be made, but they should be balanced, and they should continue progress to reduce emissions and improve fuel economy.

Mrs. Dingell. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I have to yield back, but I do want to make the point that there is a demand for some electric vehicles.

Mr. Bozzella. I agree 100 percent with that. There is, and there is progress, and that is clearly a critical part of a competitive automotive industry and our future.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Dingell.

Represent Schrier recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. Schrier. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Despite significant safety improvements and innovative technologies to improve vehicle safety, you have all called attention to the fact that driving remains dangerous in the United States, and rates of roadway fatalities have actually increased in the last decade.

Of course, one thing I don't think any of you have touched on yet is pedestrian cyclist and scooter safety injury and death. And so, perhaps, if you could incorporate that into your next answer, I would be very grateful.

So some increasingly automated and autonomous systems hold this great promise for making our roads much safer, hopefully for everybody, and preventing severe crashes and deaths. But, Mr. Harkey, you mentioned in your testimony that we are seeing crashes happen when drivers are over reliant on partial automation. Like, I can see something on the screen, and I still look over my shoulder; I haven't gotten to the trust place yet.

I don't think people truly understand the limits of what their vehicles can and can't do on their own. And we have already talked about better communications. But, if you could add some specifics to that, not just in terms of sensing cars but sensing pedestrians, cyclists, and scooters and how that factors in.

Dr. Harkey. Thank you for that question, Congresswoman. Let me start with what was some stats that kind of back up your point about we didn't address it. I certainly didn't in my opening comments. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, those

are three groups of vulnerable road users where the number of fatalities, the rate of increase in fatalities has risen much more than others, vehicles in the fatality picture. Pedestrian fatalities are up more than 80 percent since they hit a low point in 2009. So it is a serious problem and it is one of the reasons that we are very much focused on safety not only inside the vehicle for the occupants in the vehicle, but we are very much focused on how do we protect those most vulnerable outside the vehicle in our testing and evaluation program and in our research programs.

I think two things to make points about here. We are seeing technologies like automatic emergency braking systems for pedestrians working. And so, as I said earlier, there -- we have seen a 27 percent decrease in those kinds of crashes, vehicles striking pedestrians with AV systems that are designed to prevent that. So that is encouraging, and I think we are going to see that moving forward. We are going to see that get better as we move to higher --

Ms. Schrier. Thank you. That is good to hear. Also, I just want to, you know, take some of that blame off the cars. Humans carry a lot of that responsibility, too, when people are stepping into streets looking at their phones and not listening for oncoming traffic. I just want to be clear: You don't have all the responsibility for that; it is just that the driver is not going to get injured.

I was also wondering -- we talked about cell phones a little bit. If you could talk about the safety of touch screens. I have found, and this is not my primary car, but the ones I have used require me to take my eyes off the road for too long than I am comfortable for. I mean, I cannot even turn on the radio until I am at a stoplight. I was wondering if you could talk about what you have found about the safety of the touch screen to the right of the driver.

Dr. Harkey. Yeah. And we have not done direct research on that, but I will give

you opinions from my team who worked with others who have worked in this, and it is a huge human factors issue and a design issue in vehicles, and so we are very much concerned about anything that takes your eyes off the roadway for an extended period of time.

And the most problematic screens that we have seen are the ones where you have to drill through menus to be able to get to the right function to turn something on or off or adjust, and so it just -- the longer your eyes are off the roadway, the more risky the situation, the more danger you are putting yourself in and your fellow road users in.

Ms. Schrier. That sounds like just dumb engineering to me, maybe engineering done by nondrivers. Okay. Last question. I have 30 seconds. Expanding on what my colleague Representative Trahan talked about with privacy issues. There was a story maybe a year ago that a whole bunch of people's car insurance rates went up because car companies were sharing data about their driving with the insurance companies without the drivers being at all aware of this. And you can say that this would make things safer although, if you are not telling the driver that they are being monitored, that doesn't help their safety; it just makes them angry when they get their bill. You talked about voluntary privacy commitments. I have eight seconds. Which car companies decided to reveal this information about their drivers without telling them?

Mr. Bozzella. So every car company has agreed with these principles, and they are enforceable at the Federal Trade Commission. So they are not voluntary. They are enforceable. But I believe -- I 100 percent agree with you that we need a Federal privacy framework, a Federal privacy law to clarify all of this. But context is important, and most important is consent. Consumers should get consent.

Ms. Schrier. Can you name the companies just so the people watching are aware?

Mr. Bozzella. Of the companies, there was -- this is -- there was one company that you are referring to, General Motors, that was the subject of those -- that news article.

Mr. Fulcher. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. Schrier. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Schrier.

Representative Clarke is recognized for 5 minutes

Ms. Clarke. Good morning for about 10 more minutes, and thank you to Chairman Fulcher and Ranking Member Schakowsky for holding this hearing today.

I want to thank our witnesses for testifying and sharing your expertise with us as well.

I want to talk about the intersection between the irresponsible 10-year moratorium on State and local laws regulating artificial intelligence that my Republican colleagues supported in the reconciliation bill they all voted for and State and local regulation of autonomous vehicles or AVs. AVs are a promising technology that, with adequate regulation and rigorous testing, can potentially be very useful in curbing roadway fatalities and offering more transportation options to persons with disabilities and really to all of us. Autonomous vehicles are artificial intelligence to -- use artificial intelligence to operate and to make decisions about how to navigate our roadways.

It is no secret that there is no Federal framework regulating AVs, nor is there a broad Federal law regulating AI. So States and local governments have stepped up to protect the public and oversee AVs on our public roads. In New York City and State, we have laws regulating that specifically allow -- excuse me, regulations that specifically allow for the safe testing of autonomous vehicles. These are not general purpose laws. They do not apply equally to AVs and to cars driven by people.

The Republican AI moratorium in the House's version of the reconciliation bill would prohibit New York City and New York State from adopting and enforcing laws governing AVs, stripping the city and the State of their oversight of AV deployment on New York roads, making AV deployment that much less safe in New York. The version in the current draft of the Senate reconciliation bill will prohibit New York from enforcing its AV and other AI laws if it accepts funding to build out high-speed internet. Either way, New Yorkers lose.

So, Ms. Chase, are there additional examples of safety-enhancing State-level AV regulations that would be unenforceable if a broad AI moratorium were adopted?

Ms. Chase. Thank you for the question. We have significant concerns, albeit I am not an AI expert, but, as you rightly point out, that AVs use AI. So, if there is a moratorium that prevents States and localities from issuing regulations, for example, certain areas to be contained, as Mr. Farrah pointed out, which is called an operational design domain where certain times or under certain weather conditions. We have concerns that those will be disallowed under this ban. It is still, as you rightly point out, being worked out or debated in Congress. So we don't know the final language yet, but we have very significant concerns that absent any Federal regulations that States should be allowed -- they must be allowed to protect their citizens.

Ms. Clarke. Very well. And some witnesses today have discussed a growing AV industry and expansion of public trust in AVs. Ms. Chase, how would an AI moratorium that ends State programs to test and provide guardrails for AVs deployment impact industry growth and adoption?

Ms. Chase. Well, I am not an expert on AV growth and adoption. Mr. Farrah probably could address that, but what I would like to say is that public opinion polls that we have commissioned show that the American public is very concerned and weary about

getting into autonomous vehicles, and if they learn that, not only are there no Federal regulations, but now there are no State regulations to protect them in getting into a vehicle, that that very shaky acceptance, if you will, of autonomous vehicles could be threatened. And our organization is not for or against autonomous vehicles. If they can be achieved safely and reduce -- significantly reduce crashes on our roadways, fantastic.

But what we have been observing -- and let me just say, you know, there have been comments made about how many miles autonomous vehicles, and to the moon and back. Really, to compare, it is only -- AVs have only driven .004 percent of what human drivers drive every year to just provide some context there. So it is not an apples-to-apples comparison. But we have significant concerns, that absent regulation, that these autonomous vehicles will be put on the roadways, and they can already be put on roadways to test and not comply with any Federal regulation now.

Ms. Clarke. Very well.

Well, Mr. Farrah, you are shaking your head. Would you want to add your perspective?

Mr. Farrah. Congresswoman, thank you very much for the opportunity. I think this is maybe an obvious point, but NHTSA regulates all vehicles that are operating on public roads. Our members are regulated by NHTSA. If they are heavy duty vehicles, by FMCSA as well. Those regulations apply to all vehicles. What we are talking about is a Federal policy framework that gets an AV specific items, and so it is not the case that these are unregulated.

Ms. Clarke. I just -- okay.

Mr. Fulcher. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Ms. Clarke. Sorry about that. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

To be continued, folks.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Clarke.

Representative Veasey is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Veasey. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is no secret that America stands to benefit from development and deployment of AI systems, including in the automotive industry. And, at the same time, we have had experts repeatedly raise concerns about some of the risk that AI poses. I know that a faulty language model may be annoying, but a faulty AI in an autonomous car can kill or injure, and the stakes are very high.

This week Texas passed a new autonomous vehicle law requiring authorization from the State's department of motor vehicles for self-driving cars on public streets without human interaction. And meanwhile, House Republicans have supported and passed a 10-year freeze on State regulations concerning artificial intelligence. If this freeze is passed by the Senate and signed into law, it would effectively prevent States such as Texas from implementing their own safety and regulatory oversight of AVs. So I wanted to ask Ms. Chase, what impact could this tension between the States pursuing a cautious approach to AV regulation and some of these restrictions that I just talked about on States have when it comes to effective integration of AVs nationwide?

Ms. Chase. States should have the traditional authority to protect their citizens. That is what the Federal concept is about, especially in the absence of any Federal regulation. Let me just clarify, when there are no FMVSS standards for the advanced technologies, true AVs have to comply with the traditional FMVSS, but there is no regulations on these new technologies, just to counter the last point. So, to your point, it is essential that the States and localities be able to protect their citizens and absent any -- and should that authority be taken away, that is threatened.

Mr. Veasey. Yeah. So how could this -- back to you, Mrs. Chase. How could this regulatory tension influence the United States' position in the global race for leadership in AI against our competitors in China?

Ms. Chase. Well, again, if citizens don't feel safe, they are not going to get into cars. They are not going to buy these cars. And then the whole, you know, the billions of dollars that have been invested in order for AVs to achieve could be threatened. So I think it is essential that there be Federal regulations, and not just a Federal framework but Federal regulations that makes certain that these vehicles perform as needed and as expected.

Mr. Veasey. Right. Exactly. I know that it was deeply concerning to a lot of people that, just before Elon Musk departed the administration, DOGE slashed the number of employees working on vehicle automation safety at the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, and these cuts to critical AV research and regulatory teams came only months before Tesla launched its first ever robo taxi service in Austin.

I wanted to ask Mr. Farrah, given these layoffs and potential funding cuts across the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration ordered by DOGE and Trump, how can this agency possibly fulfill its responsibility to regulate the AV industry and collect the critical safety data needed when its hands are tied behind its back?

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, thank you very much for the question, and I wanted to note briefly you noted the new Texas State law that is in place. Our organization worked very closely on that law, and Texas has obviously been a tremendous leader nationally when it comes to autonomous vehicles. In our Federal policy recommendations, we do request that there is adequate funding for NHTSA and for safety regulators. That is something that is up to Congress to ultimately set the levels for that, but we want to make sure that NHTSA and FMCSA have adequate resources

because we are asking for them to set new regulations as it relates to autonomous vehicles. We want to make sure there are people in the seats to be able to do that.

Mr. Veasey. Absolutely. And I know that, as the industry continues to advance, and it is amazing to go to Austin and see all the cars everywhere, but as the industry continues to rapidly advance and deploy AVs in our communities, what can Congress do to ensure that AVs are equipped with consumer and public friendly features like blind spot detection and rear automatic emergency braking and rear cross traffic alert?

Ms. Chase. Are you looking at me?

Mr. Veasey. Either one, yeah.

Ms. Chase. Okay. Great. We strongly encourage Congress in the next reauthorization bill to include requirements for the U.S. Department of Transportation to conduct rulemakings and issue final rules by a date certain for these technologies which the Insurance Institute For Highway Safety has demonstrated to significantly reduce crashes such as the ones that you have mentioned.

Mr. Veasey. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Mr. Veasey.

Chair recognizes Representative Kelly for 5 minutes.

Ms. Kelly. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses. Over the past decade, roadway fatalities and injuries have increased substantially in the United States. Congress has passed bipartisan laws directing NHTSA to adopt rules to reverse its troubling trend. NHTSA has been slow to implement many of these measures delaying the adoption of technologies which would have the potential to save lives.

Ms. Chase, speeding is one of the leading factors in many motor vehicle crashes. What actions can Congress take to promote technologies that will reduce incidents of

speeding?

RPTR DEAN

EDTR ZAMORA

[12:00 p.m.]

Ms. Chase. Thank you for the question.

Yes, speeding is a tremendous problem on our roadways, and the old adage speed skills remains true. We support intelligent speed assistance, and those require the vehicle to comply with speed limits. Speed limits are set for a reason. We all know people exceed speed limits and shouldn't because there are safety dangers.

So what ISA does is make sure, first, it can alert the driver to let them know if they are exceeding a speed limit. And then it can also -- the next step would be to take matter -- to have the vehicle -- slow the vehicle down.

There is strong bipartisan support. In fact, the first law in the country was enacted this year in Virginia that requires ISA for offenders such as -- known as super speeders, those people we know who, like, race on the highways and have been convicted of doing so, to reduce their speed limits. And we strongly support that. We also support Federal action to incentivize States to continue this.

Right now, only Virginia, Washington State, and also the District of Columbia have these laws, and we want to see these laws throughout the country. So ISA is a proven technology to combat speeding.

Ms. Kelly. Thank you so much.

Mr. Harkey, regarding my previous question to Ms. Chase, my district is urban, suburban, and rural. I start in Chicago, and I have 4,500 farms in my district.

Does the research show distinguishing factors contributing to crashes due to excessive speeding between urban, suburban, and rural areas?

Dr. Harkey. Yeah, speeding is a problem, as Ms. Chase mentioned, everywhere. And so it is a factor in rural and urban areas.

One of the most critical things, though, when you start talking about urban areas, where speed really impacts is on the pedestrian safety issue. We talked about the vulnerable road users, the bicyclists. And so one of the things that we really have to pay attention to is how we are addressing speed in those areas. And that is where vehicle technologies such as ISA can play a role.

But it is really important to remember, anything we are talking about with technology and vehicles is the long game. It takes a long time for the vehicle fleet to turn over. And so we have to continue to look for things that we can do today. So this is where things like speed safety cameras are so critical. And we are seeing, you know, a rise in those being allowed now in the States, in work zones, in school zones to protect the most vulnerable. But we need those more broadly in our system.

And so anything that we can do as a system to slow down vehicles, get drivers to understand the risks that they are taking, is an important step.

Ms. Chase. May I add to something Mr. McCarthy [sic] just said? Right now, as he rightly pointed out, Federal funds can be used for speed safety cameras in school and work zones, but they cannot be used outside of them. So it would be a tremendous step for Congress to allow Federal funds to be used by localities to use speed safety cameras.

Ms. Kelly. Thank you.

Advanced driver assistance systems are becoming more and more prevalent in new and higher end vehicles. These technologies can reduce crashes and save lives.

Mr. Bozzella, as more level to advance driver assistance systems are utilized in new vehicles, how do we ensure that when low-income and middle-class Americans buy

cars, which are so expensive, they too can have access to these advanced safety features that are found in more expensive vehicles?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes. This is very important. Safety needs to be available for every consumer in every vehicle. And what we are seeing with ADAS systems, these advanced driver assistance systems, is that they are increasingly available at every price point in virtually every sized vehicle. That is encouraging. And I think what you are going to see is more of that as the technology develops and as customers -- excuse me, as manufacturers provide these vehicles and customers get comfortable with them.

So I am encouraged by what we see in the marketplace today, and I think it will continue.

Ms. Kelly. Thank you. Just one quick question. We talk about speed. Is it generational or is it across the board? Like you said, people speed urban, suburban, and rural. What about agewise? Whoever.

Dr. Harkey. Yeah, it is across the board. I mean, we see the problems. And certainly there are issues with regards to demographics and speeding, and so you do have younger people, younger males who are often involved in speed-related fatalities, and so you do see some differences there. But speeding in general is just something that we have to address if we are going to get a control on our fatality numbers and start to drive them down.

Thank you.

Ms. Kelly. Thank you all so much. And I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Kelly.

The chair now recognizes Representative Latta for 5 minutes.

Mr. Latta. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks for our witnesses for being with us today.

You know, it is hard to believe I have been working on this on autonomous vehicles for over 10 years. We had that piece of legislation that passed this Energy and Commerce Committee unanimously. It passed the floor. Unfortunately, we didn't get it through the Senate.

But, you know, I think it is important as we look back that, you know, the number of highway deaths that we see out there in traffic acci- -- what is caused out there. We look at about 94 percent of all the accidents being caused out there because of driver error. And I ride just about every year with the Ohio Highway Patrol. And when the troopers, we are out on the road, they can point out quickly people that are not paying attention. And so, you know, we want to make sure that we get this legislation passed. Once again, we are going to be reintroducing the legislation because we have got to get it done, because there are a lot of reasons.

But one of the things I said it is so important when we go and look at this is it has always been safety first, safety last, safety always.

And so, Mr. Farrah, you know, as we look forward in going with the AVs that need to be as safe or safer than any vehicle on the road today, you know, it is notable that, you know, an AV is never tired, it is never distracted, it is never impaired. But how else can we ensure that when an AV is on the road it meets that threshold and can detect and respond to relevant road users?

Mr. Farrah. Congressman Latta, I want to first start by thanking you for all your efforts over the course of a very long time and acknowledge all of the effort that you put into this issue. I don't think there is anyone in Congress whose thought more deeply about this and has been more committed to this. And you have worked very closely with Congresswoman Dingell as well. I know she stepped out of the room here, but I wanted to acknowledge her work as well. And very pleased to work with you again to

try and advance this legislation.

And I think that you really articulated why this is so important from a safety perspective, from an economic perspective, and from a strategic competitor perspective. And so I think that there are a couple of things that we need to do here, really to make sure that we are advancing public trust.

And of one those is making sure that the Federal Government is speaking to vehicle design, construction, and performance issues, which only it can speak to uniformly. And that is something that is going to be married with a lot of the great efforts that have happened in a variety of U.S. States, including in your State of Ohio. And so from a Federal perspective what we would like to see with Federal AV legislation is speak, first and foremost, to trying to get rulemakings off the ground at the Department of transportation, specifically NHTSA, that work to build public trust, requiring a safety case, requiring a behavioral competency test, and also creating this national AV safety data repository that I talked with Representative Mullin about.

In addition to that, there is also a lot of issues around vehicle design that we would very much like to see Congress speak to, specifically trying to make sure that we clarify that manual controls that are meant for human drivers are not applicable to level four or level five autonomous driving systems. That is the way we can modernize the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard. That is the way we can lead to more accessible vehicles that serve more Americans.

Mr. Latta. Thank you.

Mr. Bozzella, in your testimony, you mention the importance of modifying the "make inoperative" provision. Will you share why this is so essential?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes. And it builds I think very much on Mr. Farrah's comments. We have Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards that are built around hands and feet

and heads and eyes. And so -- and we also have vehicles that have steering wheels and pedals and the like. In an AV context, especially in perhaps a level three AV context where the vehicle is both able to be operated autonomously, say in a highway setting or in a traffic jam setting, those manual controls don't go away, but they need to be made inoperative while the ADS, the automated driving system, is in control. Federal regulation is unclear about what do about that.

So it is important that the law clarify that a manufacturer can do that, right? And so all the testing has been done, all of the certifications have been done, safety has been assured. When the system is engaged, when the ADS is driving, those controls should be disengaged. Current Federal regulation doesn't allow a manufacturer to disengage systems that are required by Federal law right now -- or Federal standards right now.

Mr. Latta. Well, thank you.

Mr. Farrah, I only have about 17 seconds left, but real quickly, what happens if we don't act? What is going to happen, especially when we are looking forward to the competition where it might be coming from? I only have about 7 seconds. Sorry.

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, I will say very briefly that while the United States invented autonomous vehicles, we are currently the leader. We are far from the only country that wants to be the global leader. China, and specifically the Communist Party in China, is very dedicated to being the global leader on autonomous vehicles. We need a Federal policy framework in place to help this industry move faster and ultimately lead globally.

Mr. Latta. Well, thank you very much.

And I yield back. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Latta.

Representative Dunn is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Dunn. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm grateful to be able to join this hearing today.

I am here to discuss a critical consumer choice, an automotive safety issue that hits close to home for almost every American. If you own a truck, a car, or a motorcycle, this matters to you, and I am referring to the right to repair bill. I applaud my colleagues on E&C for supporting my legislation, H.R. 1566, the right to repair. We had 60 bipartisan cosponsors. Last Congress, we already have 30, this -- cosponsors this year, and a bipartisan Senate bill for the first time. So I want to thank my colleagues on this subcommittee, Diana Harshbarger, Cliff Bentz, and Dr. Kim Schrier, for already cosponsoring. I offer that opportunity to everybody.

For most Floridians, car ownership is essential. However, several colleagues have mentioned there are automotive sectors facing some significant marketplace and regulatory changes. And as cars become more complex, they have turned into kind of computers on wheels, which is great for innovation. However, it is imperative we protect the consumer choice about how and where we get our cars repaired or whether we repair them ourselves.

My bill is -- I am from that generation. We did a lot of that. My bill is motivated by a preservation of consumer choice, as well as the restoration of fair and open marketplace in the automotive repair industries and parts. Where traditionally independent repair technicians could just plug into the OBD port, analyze critical repair maintenance data, the phase-out of these tools in newer vehicles and connected vehicles is incredibly problematic, and it is just among other tech restrictions as well.

If you own your own car, then you should own the data generated by your car, specifically critical repair maintenance, wear and tear, calibration and recalibration of parts. This is just a basic concept of ownership. You own it, it is yours.

Over the past 3 years, I have deliberately worked with the many stakeholders, including the independent repair industry, the auto manufacturers, the aftermarket parts industry, and colleagues on this committee, to ensure that there is a robust representation of all of these parties in the bill, and I think that is why there are new provisions in H.R. 1566 codifying protections for intellectual property trade secrets, cybersecurity, parity between repair shops and dealerships, and cost and access to repair data, and even protections around autonomous vehicle systems.

Just days ago, The Wall Street Journal published an article, "High Costs Have Ended America's Love Affair With Cars". It is kind of a riveting read. And they show that the average cost of owning a vehicle these days in America is almost $12,300 a year. That is after -- that is just owning the thing. So that is a 30 percent rise in the last few years. Cost issues, coupled with the mounting complexity of new technology, I think that confirms that the REPAIR Act is needed in order to update the regulations and level the playing field.

Mr. Chairman, I have a letter of support from 20 of the various organizations in this industry supporting this bill. May I submit for the record?

Mr. Fulcher. Without objection.

[The information follows:]

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Mr. Dunn. Thank you very much.

I want to thank the Automotive Vehicle Industry Association for working with me to negotiate the AV protections and the REPAIR Act, together with your team and Chairman Bilirakis' team. We included repair protections around the highest levels of SAE standards four and five. This will ensure that the highly computerized system should not be unintentionally swept into requiring a company to share any computerized data that may affect the intellectual property of the autonomous vehicle company or IP related to the computerized system of the car that is unrelated to repairs.

I also want to quickly mention how helpful Tesla has been in working with our right to repair bill. They understand that even though their cars are fancy, they don't mean Americans can't take their Teslas to an independent repair shop to get things fixed.

Mr. Farrah, how important is it for the AV industry to ensure that Americans still have the option to fix their autonomous vehicles', like, bumpers, tires, windows, without restricting access to critical repair data?

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, thank you very much for the comments. And I want to acknowledge all the great effort that you took last Congress and also continuing on to this Congress and working with Chairman Bilirakis on the specific provisions that you reference around autonomous vehicles at levels four and five.

I think it is important to acknowledge that the way in which our industry is evolving right now is very much a fleet-managed model where the vehicles are owned and maintained by the manufacturer, by the autonomous vehicle developer that is there, that is something that will probably continue to evolve in the future. We need to make sure from a safety perspective that we are maintaining these vehicles at the highest possible care because they are very elaborate, very complicated instruments.

Obviously, the safety of Americans is paramount to everything we do.

Mr. Dunn. And I am sure that we will do that. I see my time -- the time flies here, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back, but I will submit questions for the record for the rest of the panel. And with that, I yield back. Thank you.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Dunn.

And for a brief closing statement, Representative Schakowsky, the ranking member, is recognized.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And congratulations on the way you handled this committee. I hope you will share this information with Gus Bilirakis, when he comes back, that every single member on the Democratic side came and asked questions and were participating. It is not all the time that that happens, and many of the Republicans as well. There is clearly a lot of interest in this issue, and I am so happy about that because we have a lot of work still to do about autonomous vehicles, about safety, and I look forward to moving forward.

And I want to say to Gus -- he is at his son's wedding, and so we want to wish him well, in Greece, yes. So thank you very much for your leadership today.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you to the ranking member.

And the chair now recognizes Representative Kean from New Jersey for 5 minutes.

Mr. Kean. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to our distinguished witnesses being here today.

As Congress works to ensure that our roadways are safe, I am grateful for the opportunity to hear from experts in the automobile industry on innovation and the impacts that NHTSA is having on safety on New Jersey's roads and across the United States.

So, Mr. Bozzella, the central aspect of the Motor Vehicle Safety Act is that NHTSA

promulgates Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards and that motor vehicle manufacturers certify in compliance with all applicable standards. Can you discuss the importance of maintaining NHTSA's self-certification regulatory framework and how this framework supports motor vehicle safety and innovation?

Mr. Bozzella. Yes. Thank you, Congressman.

This is an essential structure that supports innovation and supports safety at the same time. What is key to this, however, is NHTSA has to make sure that they continue to maintain and update Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards. What we have seen is that motor vehicle safety standards that are no longer relevant, necessary, or producing safety are often still on the books, and then they are -- they slow innovation down. For example, we have an antiquated bumper standard that makes it difficult for manufacturers to put in the bumpers, the sensors required for automatic emergency braking, for example.

So Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards are critical. Self-assessments and self-certification are critical because they move these technologies into the marketplace quickly. But the key to this is there needs to be alignment and fast movements to modernize these.

Mr. Kean. Thank you.

Mr. Farrah, can you point to any research that supports the safety promise of autonomous vehicles?

Mr. Farrah. Congressman, thank you very much. I would be happy to.

And I will start by saying that, right now, the autonomous vehicle industry, like with lower levels of autonomy, is reporting data under the standing general order at NHTSA. And so we very much want to see this process evolve and improve to create a national AV safety data repository so that Americans can better understand the safety of

these vehicle, because we know that public trust goes hand in hand with the deployment of these vehicles and that is something that our industry has very much embraced and we want to work on a bipartisan basis with members of this committee.

In addition to that, there has also been tremendous amounts of data that has been produced both by the manufacturers themselves and by the industry writ large. And so for AVIA's part, we have been collecting the total amount of autonomous miles driven by our members over the course of a number of years. We published just last month that our members have driven more than 145 million autonomous miles just on U.S. public roads. It doesn't include simulation, it doesn't include closed tracks. And what is really interesting about that is that figure has more than doubled in just the last year. It went from 70 million to 145 million. So it really speaks to the inflection point that we are at right now with regard to commercialization.

And then last but not least, I will just go back to what I said before, which is that a number of the manufacturers have been producing data about their safety information that is out there. One study that is very, very compelling is that Swiss Re did an evaluation of Waymo and 3.8 million miles that the Waymo driver drove. And what they demonstrated, there was 100 percent reduction in bodily harm claims that were done over that period of time. And you think about that is 3.8 million miles. What if we could do that at scale in the United States and have that amount of reduction of bodily injury claims? It really goes to show the promise of the technology.

Mr. Kean. Thank you.

And, Dr. Harkey, seat belt use dramatically decreases the risk of a fatal injury during a crash. Can you discuss the latest research on seat belt use and effective solutions to promote seat belt use?

Dr. Harkey. Yeah. Thank you for the question, Congressman.

We know the seat belt is still the most important safety feature in a vehicle today, and we stress that in every communication that we put out almost. And one of the things that is a real challenge is getting people to understand that they need to wear that seat belt -- front seat, backseat, no matter where you are sitting in the vehicle -- at all times, under all speeds, under all scenarios. And so it is something we continue to work on.

It is a real disconnect. We see observe seat belt usage in this country, and for front seat passengers above 90 percent now, for rear seat passengers around 75 percent. That all sounds really good and it is really encouraging. Yet the number of fatalities that we see in our country, almost half of those in the front seat of passenger cars are unbelted. And so we have got to do a lot more work to figure out how to get people to buckle up, particularly those who are at high risk, in vehicles.

And so there is a lot more work that needs to be done there. And I would encourage this committee to help NHTSA think about what they can do to help with those who are not wearing that seat belt.

Mr. Kean. Thank you. I yield back.

Mr. Fulcher. Thank you, Representative Kean.

To the panel, thank you for your participation today. As we have discussed and as the ranking member pointed out, there is a lot of interest in this. And anytime there is a new technology that comes around, that adoption implementation is going to be a key thing, and the interest that you represent is going to play a key role in that.

Dr. Harkey, I will point out to you specifically, when it comes to data, there can never be too much of that, especially when you are adopting something new.

So with that, I ask unanimous consent the documents on the staff document list be submitted for the record.

Without objection, so ordered.

Again, thank you to our witnesses for being here today. If members have additional written questions for you all, they will be submitted to you.

I remind members that they have 10 business days to submit questions for the record. And I ask the witnesses to respond to the questions promptly. Members should submit their questions by the close of business Friday, July 11.

And with that, the subcommittee is adjourned.

[The information follows:]

******** COMMITTEE INSERT ********

[Whereupon, at 12:24 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]