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SUMMER DRIVING DANGERS: EXPLORING WAYS TO PROTECT DRIVERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 2019

House of Representatives,

Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce,

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. Jan Schakowsky [chairwoman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Schakowsky, O'Halleran, Lujan, Cardenas, Blunt Rochester, Soto, Matsui, McNerney, Pallone (ex officio), Rodgers, Latta, Guthrie, Bucshon, Hudson, Carter, and Walden (ex officio).

Staff Present: Jeff Carroll, Staff Director; Evan Gilbert, Deputy Press Secretary;

Lisa Goldman, Senior Counsel; Waverly Gordon, Deputy Chief Counsel; Daniel Greene, Professional Staff Member; Alex Hoehn-Saric, Chief Counsel, Communications and Consumer Protection; Zach Kahan, Outreach and Member Service Coordinator; Meghan Mullon, Staff Assistant; Tim Robinson, Chief Counsel; Chloe Rodriguez, Policy Analyst; Andrew Souvall, Director of Communications, Outreach and Member Services; Benjamin Tabor, Staff Assistant; Sydney Terry, Policy Coordinator;

Mike Bloomquist, Minority Staff Director; Melissa Froelich, Minority Chief Counsel, CPAC; Peter Kielty, Minority General Counsel; Bijan Koohmaraie, Minority Counsel, CPAC; and Brannon Rains, Minority Legislative Clerk.

Ms. Schakowsky. The Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Commerce will now come to order.

The chair now recognizes -- oh, I am sorry. The chair now recognizes herself for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

Good morning, and thank you so much for being with us today. Today's hearing is about promoting auto safety and raising awareness about the threats families face in our Nation's -- on our Nation's roads, and off the roads as well, as we enter summer driving seasons.

One of those threats is child vehicular heatstroke, which occurs when a child is left in an overheating car. I would like to take a moment to recognize two families who have endured such tragedies and turned their pain into action, advocating for legislation to make sure no child ever dies in an overheating car.

Miles and Carol Harrison from Purcellville, Virginia. They are the parents of Chase, who died at only 21 months in a -- on July 8, 2008, after being unknowingly left in a hot car.

Erin Holly of Charlotte, South Carolina, her now 2-year-old son, Finn, was 4 weeks old when he was unknowingly left in her family car -- in their family car. Fortunately, his parents quickly realized their mistake and rescued their baby boy. But just a few months later, one of Finn's daycare classmates died in a hot car. Shortly after, a 7-month old child in Erin's community also died in an overheated car.

You know, there are far too many ways for parents to lose children that we can't control. We have a duty, however, to do everything we can to ensure that parents don't lose a child when we can prevent that. Fifty-two children died in heatstroke in cars last

year, 52. In most cases, the parents accidentally -- loving parents accidentally left their child in the car. Eight children died in hot cars so far this year. Just yesterday -- just yesterday, a 5-month-old girl tragically died in a van sitting outside of her daycare.

Education alone cannot solve this crisis. Even the most attentive parent can get distracted and inadvertently leave their child in a rapidly warming vehicle. A simple alert notification for parents that they have left their child in the car can save their lives.

Yesterday, we had a press conference where several such technologies were displayed, proving that we have the technological skill that we need to prevent many of these tragedies. We do have to do an evaluation of those different technologies.

You get a warning when you leave keys in the car or when you leave your lights on. Every new car should be equipped with technology to effectively alert parents if they learn that a child is in the car. That is why I am eager to reintroduce hot cars -- the HOT CARS Act with Congressman Ryan to -- and also with -- yes, and also Congressman King of New York, that new cars come equipped with an alert system.

I also look forward to exploring many other safety technologies, such as automatic emergency braking, lane departures, departure warnings, and pedestrian detection that exist today and can dramatically reduce the number of automobile fatalities and injuries. But deployment of these safety features is slow and often reserved for those willing to pay a premium for advanced technologies in their cars. It is time for Congress to take decisive action to keep families safe, and we all have a track record -- and we do have a track record of success.

Last year, finally, rear backup cameras became standard in new vehicles, and an issue that I championed for a long time before it actually became the law and was

enforced. And thanks to the commitment of those parents, children, and advocates who made that happen. I look forward to exploring how we can ensure that all cars can be equipped with the best safety features.

And I now yield to the ranking member, Mrs. McMorris Rodgers.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Schakowsky follows:]

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Mrs. Rodgers. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I want to just say thank you for your leadership on these important issues for many years and now as the chair of this subcommittee.

Welcome to everyone. Today, we are going to explore ways that we can protect drivers and their families from dangers on our roadways, as well as off our roadways, as the chairwoman just outlined.

First, thank you, Mr. Harrison, for being here. Your story is powerful and it is moving, and I want to commend you for your commitment to Chase.

Several automakers have taken the challenge of reducing instances children are left in cars head on. And there is also several startups focusing on other technologies to address these tragedies. I am committed to finding all paths to getting safety and safe technologies into cars faster. Sometimes that means industry needs certainty, and sometimes that means the market needs space for innovation, or both.

This weekend is Memorial Day weekend, and it brings families and friends together. We honor those who have sacrificed their lives defending our rights and our freedom. It also unofficially marks the start of the summer vacation travel season, and with more travel, comes more risk on the roads.

In recent years, more than 300 people have died over the holiday weekend, and some estimate that the number could increase over this weekend. I encourage everyone here and everyone watching, be safe, put your phone down, focus on driving. Do not drive if you have consumed any alcohol or other drugs. If you feel different, drive different. Put on your seatbelt. Seatbelts save lives.

Risk on our roadways also present safety concerns year round. Technology

offers potential solutions to many of these safety concerns. Right now, advanced driver assistance systems are in more and more cars that we drive every day. Advanced driver assistance systems include automatic emergency braking, lane departure warning, crash avoidance technology, blind spot detection, vehicle-to-vehicle communications, V2X, and so much more.

In fact, 20 automakers have voluntarily pledged to include automatic emergency braking, the AEB, in virtually all new passenger vehicles by September 2022. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimates that by 2025, this agreement will prevent 28,000 crashes and 12,000 injuries. These systems are the foundation and building blocks for self-driving vehicles.

We lose more than 37,000 lives a year on our roads. And according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 94 percent of all accidents are due to human error. These include distracted driving, driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and even driving drowsy. The more we can safely automate the driving process, the more human error we can remove. As a result, we have greatly improved the safety of our roadways.

In addition to drastically improving safety, self-driving vehicles offer vast mobility benefits. People with disabilities, our elderly community, and those not served by traditional public transportation stand to gain so much from widespread use of self-driving vehicles.

Self-driving vehicles promise to improve freedom and mobility for our communities. Self-driving vehicles would make making -- going to work, to the grocery store, across town to visit friends, or going to the doctor so much more easier.

Self-driving vehicles will restore independence and break down the transportation barriers for so many Americans.

Self-driving vehicles are also important for our global standing. Right now, the United States is the global leader in innovation. To compete and remain the leader, we must do everything we can to advance the safe development and deployment of self-driving vehicle technology. Other countries are moving full speed ahead. Some are even developing their technology in our own backyard. Almost a quarter of all companies testing in California are Chinese.

Earlier this year, I joined my colleagues, Republican Leader Walden and Representative Latta, urging this committee to continue the bipartisan work from last Congress to advance the safe development of self-driving cars.

I want to thank the chairwoman, Chair Schakowsky, for holding this important hearing for us to explore ways, so many ways in which we can improve auto safety and save lives.

Thank you, and I yield back.

[The prepared statement of Mrs. Rodgers follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. The gentlewoman yields back.

And now I recognize Chairman Pallone for 5 minutes for his opening statement.

The Chairman. Thank you, Madam Chair.

This hearing is particularly timely as the Memorial Day weekend is one of the busiest travel weekends of the year. Millions of Americans are taking to the Nation's roads to travel to barbecues and beaches, including many heading to the Jersey Shore.

But this can be a dangerous weekend too. Nearly 350 people died in motor vehicle crashes over Memorial Day weekend in 2017. And as temperatures rise, so does the risk of heatstroke for children left in cars. In 2017, more than 40,000 people died as a result of a motor vehicle accident, and 4.6 million were injured.

And unfortunately, automobile fatalities are on the rise. Motor vehicle death rates have steeply increased since 2014, after nearly a decade of falling. It is a troubling trend suggesting that we need to double down on our efforts to improve the safety of our roadways.

Technologies exist that will vastly improve motor vehicle safety, but we must find ways to get them in the hands of all drivers. Take, for example, heatstroke victims in cars. One child's death is an extraordinary tragedy. Fifty-two is a crisis. Last year, 52 children died from heatstroke after being left in hot cars. Over the last 20 years, 802 children have been lost from these types of tragedies, and more than half of those deaths occur when a distracted parent accidentally leaves his or her child in a vehicle.

And this is heartbreak -- this is a heartbreak, obviously, that Mr. Harrison knows all too well.

Mr. Harrison, I am sorry for your loss, and I thank you for sharing your son's

stories in hopes that we can end these sorts of devastating accidents.

There are ways we can prevent kids from dying from vehicular heatstroke. Technologies alerting drivers to check their backseats for children exist today but have not been widely deployed.

This crisis requires action. Just yesterday, there was another tragic death in Florida when a baby girl died after being left in a daycare van for several hours, and that is why I applaud Chairwoman Schakowsky and Congressman Ryan for the work on the HOT CARS Act, legislation that would require vehicles to be equipped with safety technologies alerting drivers to check their rear seat after a car is turned off.

These and other existing safety technologies hold the promise of saving lives and reducing both the number and the severity of auto crashes. Crash avoidance technologies like automatic emergency brakes, rear automatic braking, blind spot detection, and lane departure warnings are all proving to reduce crashes.

Similarly, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety estimates that adaptive headlights, which automatically channel light around curbs without causing glare for oncoming traffic, could help prevent up to 90 percent of nighttime curb crashes. These headlights are available overseas but are not legal in the United States.

Yet NHTSA has not done much to require or even encourage automakers to make lifesaving technology standard. If an automotive feature or technology proves it can save lives, it should not be a luxury reserved only for those who can afford to buy the high-end car. These sorts of safety technologies should become a standard in our cars as seatbelts and air bags.

NHTSA is even failing at educating consumers and incentivizing manufacturers to

adopt safety features. The New Car Assessment Program managed by NHTSA provides ratings on a scale from one to five stars for vehicle performance in crash and rollover tests. This five-star safety rating is supposed to be a tool that helps consumers make more informed decisions when purchasing their vehicles and encourages manufacturers to exceed minimum safety standards.

But this safety seal has become a more -- basically, a mere participation trophy. Ninety-nine percent of 2016 models received four or five stars, the highest ratings. The very integrity and value of the five-star safety rating is undermined if the certification does not draw meaningful distinctions between the safety of different vehicles.

It is also not meaningful if the safety certification fails to include crucial safety technologies already deployed on automobiles. Unfortunately, the five-star safety rating does not account for advanced crash avoidance technologies like four-wheel collision warning, lane departure warning, and blind spot detection.

NHTSA started to update the program in 2015, but has yet to make needed changes. We must modernize the five-star safety rating for the 21st century auto so consumers can be empowered to identify and purchase the safest car of their choosing.

So I thank our witnesses for testifying this morning.

Madam Chair, I want to say that I really am impressed by all of the -- not only the hearings that you have been having, but the initiatives that are coming forward on consumer protection, which I really think has, you know, kind of been neglected in the past, and you are making sure that when we deal with consumer issues, that they are once again in the forefront. So I appreciate that. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Pallone follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

In lieu of the ranking Republican, Mr. Latta is now recognized for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

Mr. Latta. Well, thank you, Madam Chair. And thank you very much for holding today's hearing.

And I want to thank all of our witnesses, and especially you, Mr. Harrison, for being with us today.

As has been mentioned, this weekend is Memorial Day weekend and the unofficial start of summer. Summertime means school is out and families across the country are hitting the roads for vacation. It can also mean more inexperienced drivers behind the wheel, added congestion, and increased unpredictability on our roadways.

Today, we have the opportunity to discuss the bipartisan efforts this subcommittee can make to promote the development and deployment of different technologies that have the potential to address some of these concerns and, ultimately, save thousands of lives.

In 2016 alone, more than 37,000 people lost their lives on U.S. highways. Ninety-four percent of the accidents are attributed to human error, including driver distraction and inattention. I believe there are technologies we can utilize to prevent the loss of life during the summertime driving season and any time.

Today, many cars are already equipped with active safety features or semiautonomous driving systems. These systems known as advanced driver assistance systems help drivers stay within their designated lane, accelerate to pass a slow-moving vehicle, safely change lanes, avoid front-end collisions, and even park. These advanced

systems demonstrate the important role technology plays to address auto safety concerns and are the foundation for the eventual deployment of self-driving vehicles.

That is why last Congress, I introduced, with Chairman Schakowsky, the bipartisan SELF DRIVE Act, which clarified the Federal and State roles in regulating self-driving vehicles, provided much needed updates to outdated statutory and regulatory barriers, and ensure that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration gets the data it needs, all while focusing on consumer safety and improving mobility for individuals with disabilities or senior citizens and those underserved by inadequate public transportation.

Included in the legislation was also language to spur innovation around technology to help avoid the tragedy of a child losing his or her life in a hot vehicle. U.S. companies are investing major resources in the research and deployment of these technologies, and the SELF DRIVE Act would have provided much needed certainty and updates to existing rules to unleash this innovation.

Earlier this year, I joined Republican Leaders Walden and Rodgers in requesting the gentleman from New Jersey, the chairman of the full committee, that this committee stay focused on this issue. I believe our work on the SELF DRIVE Act was an example of this committee at its best, working together in an open process on technology that will save lives.

Since the legislation passed unanimously both in committee and on the House floor, it is my hope that we can make this issue a priority again in this Congress. Within this subcommittee, the gentlelady from Illinois, our chair, has worked tirelessly to promote technology to seek to prevent the tragedies we have heard about when a child is left in a hot car. I commend her for her work, and stand committed to working with her

in a bipartisan way to implement policies that could reduce these tragedies.

We have an opportunity to work towards ending senseless deaths on our roads by making investments in technology. I want to thank our members and staff on both sides of the aisle for their hard bipartisan work on this issue.

Again, I thank the gentlelady for having this committee hearing today, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Latta follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. I thank the gentleman.

I want to assure you that we will be working in a bipartisan way with the autonomous vehicles but also the safety protection bills. I hope everyone will come on as a co-sponsor of the HOT CARS Act.

So now it is my privilege to introduce our witnesses today. I did want to point out that there is a slightly different feature available today, and those are boxes of tissue, because we are dealing with a very, very sensitive issue today, among others.

Our witnesses are Miles Harrison, who is the father of Chase Harrison; Janette Fennell, the president and founder of KidsAndCars organization; Gary Shapiro, who is president and CEO of Consumer Technology Association; and Jason -- Levine or Levine?

Mr. Levine. Levine.

Ms. Schakowsky. -- Levine, executive director of the Center for Auto Safety.

We want to thank our witnesses for joining us today. We look forward to your testimony.

I failed to mention that all members can submit for the record opening statements. But at this time, the chair will now recognize each witness for 5 minutes to provide their opening statement.

I think most people here understand the light system. You have a series of lights. The light will initially be green at the start of your opening statement. The light will then turn yellow when you have 1 minute remaining, and please begin to wrap up testimony at that point. The light will turn red when your time has expired.

So, Mr. Harrison, again, very grateful for you to be here. I know this is difficult. We all do. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENTS OF MILES HARRISON, FATHER OF CHASE HARRISON; JANETTE FENNELL, PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER, KIDSANDCARS.ORG; GARY SHAPIRO, PRESIDENT AND CEO, CONSUMER TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION; AND JASON LEVINE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR AUTO SAFETY

STATEMENT OF MILES HARRISON

Mr. Harrison. Thank you, ma'am, very much. And for everyone here, thank you for your time.

Eleven years ago, it was a typical day at my home, everyone getting up, getting ready to head out the door, as well as myself getting ready to go to work. Like many parents, I was multitasking thinking of all the things to do during the day. We were rushing around, rushing around, not very organized.

My world changed forever that day. When I went to my office, I was focused on all the work problems that people typically focus on, and the day flew by. I even went out to lunch with my boss. We talked about all the problems, all the pressures.

Having no idea what time it was, at the end of the day, a colleague of mine came up to my office around 5 p.m. and said, hey, do you have a doll in your car? And I said, a doll? What are you talking about?

It was then that I realized, oh my God, oh my God, what have I done? I ran outside of my office and rushed to my car. I saw my son Chase through the window. I threw open the car door and grabbed him and rushed into my office carrying him and

screaming, oh my God, oh my God. I had not dropped him off at daycare.

I was so distraught and upset I couldn't see straight. I was taken by ambulance to the emergency room. And I remember a nurse asking me if I wanted something for the pain, and I said, I don't deserve that. I need to feel all this pain.

From the hospital they took me to the police station where the police insinuated that I had murdered my son. The first thing they asked me is if I had life insurance on my son. I didn't even think about that.

From the police station I was taken to a hospital where I stayed under an assumed name for 2 weeks, because if I had checked in with my real name, I would have been arrested. During my hospital stay, my son had a funeral, which I was not allowed to attend. I made my own funeral by pulling out the trundle part of my bed and had my own funeral because I could not go to my son's.

My story continues with a very public trial, fighting a charge of involuntary manslaughter, which, thank God, I was found not guilty. But it didn't matter to me. I was already guilty, so full of shame and embarrassment and anger. I had killed my son.

I cry every day for Chase. I still haven't forgiven myself, don't know if I ever will.

After the trial, Gene Weingarten wrote a Pulitzer Prize article called "Fatal Distraction" about parents who have gone through what my family has gone through.

This didn't have to happen. If there had been a simple alert in my car, this would not have happened. Children are dying unnecessarily. Families are being destroyed.

In my son's honor, we have made it a mission to try to help Congress implement some sort of a car warning system. Please, I implore you to enact this legislation.

I know my time is running up, so I am going to be -- I am going to stop. But I want to thank you all for hearing my testimony. And please help us.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Harrison follows:]

******** INSERT 1-1 ********

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you so much.

Ms. Fennell, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF JANETTE FENNELL

Ms. Fennell. Madam Chairwoman, I am Janette Fennell, the founder and president of KidsAndCars.org. We are an organization dedicated to improving safety of children in and around motor vehicles. KidsAndCars.org appreciates the opportunity to express our views on the HOT CARS Act and other available technologies that will save the lives of children.

In 1996, my family was kidnapped at gunpoint in San Francisco and locked in the trunk of our car. Thankfully, we all survived and used this traumatic experience to help guide the Federal regulatory process to ensure that no one else had to end up in the trunk of a vehicle without a means of escape. Now, all vehicles come with an internal trunk release as standard equipment.

Though we are proud of that accomplishment, the most important lesson we continue to learn every day is that the simple changes to vehicles save lives. In fact, not one person has died in a vehicle equipped with an internal trunk release, not one.

We are showing a chart here that talk about hot car deaths. Starting in the mid-1990s, parents were told to transport their children in the backseat of vehicles to protect them from the air bags in the front seat. Laws were passed requiring this behavior, and that forever changed the way American children are transported.

As you can see from this chart, while we have basically eradicated children being

killed by overpowered air bags, children continue to die in hot cars.

When most people think about memory, they think about retrospective memory, the ability to recall things from the past. The other type of memory is prospective memory, the ability to plan and execute an action in the future, for example, the intention to drop a baby at daycare.

Prospective memory is more prone to forgetfulness. If ever -- if you have ever forgotten something on top of your car or failed to run an errand, you have experienced the fickleness of our prospective memory. Unknowingly leaving a child in a vehicle is a prospective memory failure.

Studies show that in autopilot, the brain is unable to account for a change in routine. The reason is that when you are in autopilot, you are functioning on your habit memories, not what is exactly happening in the here and now. The catch here is that the habit memory suppresses and completely takes over the prospective memory, regardless of the importance of your plan.

Autopilot is most common during times of stress and fatigue, both of which all parents of young children experience. These cognitive failures have nothing to do with a parent's love for their child or the ability to care for them. No one in this world has an infallible memory.

We need to focus on technology because we have proven year after year that knowing this can happen to you when hearing it on the news is not changing anything. A detection system is a must. Right now, somewhere in the United States dozens of families are going about their daily lives unaware by the year's end, their child will die in a hot car.

Now, let's talk about frontovers. NHTSA's 2018 report states that frontovers are responsible for 366 deaths and 15,000 injuries. Toddlers are extremely vulnerable because they have established independent mobility at about 1 to 2 years of age, yet they have not developed the cognitive ability to understand danger. Young children are impulsive, unpredictable, and still have very poor judgment. This is a real combination for a disaster.

Automatic emergency braking or a bird's eye or 360-degree view technology uses a series of cameras and sensors all around the vehicle allowing drivers to see all sides of that vehicle.

And now keyless ignition, this is a vehicle design flaw that can be easily remedied with an automatic ignition shutoff feature. Many drivers are accustomed to using a traditional key to start and stop their vehicle. When a traditional key is removed, that means the vehicle engine is turned off. However, in vehicles with a keyless ignition, the driver can walk away with their key fob in their hand while the vehicle is left running.

And as I wrap up, I can say nothing more eloquent than a statement that was made in Automotive News. All safety-related devices should become standard equipment on all vehicles. No choice. It is not an economic decision. It is not -- it is a moral decision. When the choice becomes profit versus lives, the decision should be simple.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Fennell follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you so much.

I do want to announce that a vote has been called. We have time, I think, for Mr. Shapiro's 5 minutes, and I recognize you now, then we will break, and hopefully, all those here can come back. I will be here.

Mr. Levine. I will be here too.

Ms. Schakowsky. Okay.

STATEMENT OF GARY SHAPIRO

Mr. Shapiro. Chair Schakowsky, Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify.

The Consumer Technology Association represents over 2,200 American technology companies, 80 percent of whom are small businesses and startups. We also own and produce CES. It is the largest and most influential tech event in the world. It is the largest business event in the world in Las Vegas every January.

We applaud you and this committee for addressing this important issue, vehicle safety, especially around the busy summer driving season. We know that many lifesaving technologies exist, and others, such as self-driving technology, are quickly advancing.

At CES 2018, Carol Staninger, a passionate advocate for the welfare of children and president of Ancer, exhibited her innovation for the first time. She was 82 years old. After seeing news stories about children and pets accidentally left in hot cars, Carol decided that she could make a difference through technology. She invented a presence

detector and alarm device called Save Our Loved Ones to prevent children, seniors, and pets from being left alone in cars.

Many other entrepreneurs have introduced devices to solve this specific problem using connected car seats, apps, and Bluetooth. They all help remind parents to check the backseat.

Automakers have also worked to address this problem. Nissan has the rear-door alert system which monitors when the rear door is open and closed before and after the vehicle is in motion. Several other tech-enabled safe driving products can increase safety. There are tools to help parents monitor teenage drivers, prevent distraction, and alert first responders in the case of an emergency.

You have heard the statistics today. 30,000 to 40,000 people are dying every year on U.S. roads. That is more than 100 deaths per day, and 94 percent of serious crashes are due to human error. And on average, 11 children die in auto accidents every week, and we can prevent those tragedies.

Self-driving vehicles will lead to a huge reduction in roadway fatalities. They cannot become distracted, fatigued, or impaired, and they have a 360-degree viewing angle around the vehicle. Not only will self-driving vehicles save lives, they will empower seniors and people with disabilities. And full adoption of self-driving vehicles could cut insurance premiums by some 40 percent. We will see increased productivity as people waste less time in traffic. We will need fewer parking structures, opening new areas for green space.

And every day, there are advances in self-driving vehicles. Many companies, both here and abroad, are already testing self-driving vehicles, with countries like China

vying for the lead.

The road to fully self-driving vehicles is a global competition, and we expect every leading nation to confront tough issues such as self-driving accidents, which will occur, although in minuscule numbers compared to our national annual carnage from human drivers.

Some argue that self-driving vehicles should not be deployed until systems are perfect. This is a dangerous road as perfection may be a long, unreachable goal. Every year that we delay self-driving, we are costing tens of thousands of American lives. A RAND report found that deploying cars that are just 10 percent safer than the average human driver will save more lives than waiting until those cars are 70 percent or 90 percent better.

We will be able to save millions of lives in the future, but only if we move forward. The perfect must not be the enemy of the great. We don't have to wait for fully self-driving vehicles to start reducing the number of deaths. Driver-assist technology is already saving lives, avoiding accidents, and paving the way for completely self-driving innovations to come.

Advanced driver assistance systems can prevent nearly 30 percent of all crashes, saving 10,000 lives a year. There are technologies that help drowsy or inattentive drivers stay focused and provide specific responses, such as automatic braking and lane drift avoidance. And the aftermarket industry provides a valuable service in allowing consumers to add these great technologies to vehicles they already own. And Congress and the Department of Transportation have already recognized the value of these vehicles.

Last year, the SELF DRIVE Act, which Chair Schakowsky and Congressman Latta both introduced, as you said, and which we supported, passed out of this committee and the House unanimously. It would have given a jump start towards adopting our vehicle safety laws to address self-driving and would have made a huge difference in creating more opportunities for testing and development. Sadly, politics got in the way of it crossing the finish line in the Senate, but I am encouraged by the continued efforts of the Department of Transportation and members on both sides of the aisle to move our country forward and advance this lifesaving technology.

I ask you to continue your leadership. There are challenges. Much work remains to be done, but we are heading towards zero fatalities.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Shapiro follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you very much.

Mr. Levine, we will hear from you when we come back. And please, come right back after votes. There are three votes. Thank you.

We are in recess.

[Recess.]

RPTR WARREN

EDTR ZAMORA

[11:41 a.m.]

Ms. Schakowsky. The meeting will reconvene, if Mr. Harrison could go back to the table. Oh, there he is. Okay. Thank you.

We ready, Mr. Levine?

Mr. Levine. Yes.

Ms. Schakowsky. You may proceed for 5 minutes. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF JASON LEVINE

Mr. Latta. Thank you.

Good, morning. Thank you, Chairman Pallone, Chairwoman Schakowsky, Ranking Member Walden, and Ranking Member Rodgers, for holding this important meeting.

My name is Jason Levine, and I am the executive director of the Center for Auto Safety. Since 1970, the Center has been the Nation's premier independent nonprofit advocacy organization focused on auto safety, quality, and fuel economy. On behalf of our members and all drivers, passengers, and pedestrians, we work every day to get unsafe cars and trucks off the road as quickly as possible.

There are far too many defective vehicles and unrepaired, recalled cars and trucks on our Nation's roads. Yet our mission has also always included pressing for vehicles of tomorrow to be as safe as possible. In our five decades, we have successfully advocated

for car companies to install advanced safety technology from airbags to electronic stability control, from antilock brakes to backup cameras.

During that same time, we have urged the Department of Transportation to create performance standards to ensure these new technologies work as advertised, provide the appropriate level of safety, and make safety features standard equipment and not luxury add-ons.

Sadly, while Silicon Valley, Detroit, and Wall Street use a lot of happy talk about millions of robot cars coming to save the world in the next few months, back here on planet Earth, auto crash deaths and injuries continue to represent a public health crisis. They are the leading cause of death for 5- to 24-year-olds in the United States and are responsible for more than 38,000 funerals annually. That is the equivalent of almost every man, woman, and child in Park Ridge, Illinois, or Pullman, Washington.

Unfortunately, instead of writing minimum performance standards to require existing safety technology, the current administration seems to prefer deferring to whatever the auto industry finds most profitable at the moment. The crash avoidance technology features often highlighted in TV commercials, including automatic emergency braking, lane departure warnings, or adaptive headlights, all exist in an unregulated state with varying, unpredictable, and poorly measured performance. This lack of standards leads to consumer confusion and diminishes the increased safety protections that this technology promises.

Moreover, even existing congressional mandates through the Department of Transportation are regularly ignored. Rules for rear seatbelt reminder systems, front and side impact requirements for child seats, rollover integrity for buses, and use of

e-mail for recall notifications are each many, many years overdue.

Sadder still, the groundbreaking New Car Assessment Program, NCAP, better known as America's five-star crash rating system, has been allowed to become an afterthought when compared to our foreign competitors, all of whom base their programs on our NCAP. This is the equivalent of the United States no longer being a force in basketball on the world stage.

NHTSA's failure to update the program, combined with steps taken last year to freeze the current ratings in place, means that receiving a five-star crash rating will soon be the equivalent of receiving a Little League participation trophy.

The ability of safe -- of the -- sorry. The ability to improve the safety of the 17 million new vehicles sold to the United States every year remains in our collective reach. NHTSA must set mandatory performance standards in order to create a level playing field and ensure the safety technology meets minimum levels of functionality. Otherwise, consumer safety is dependent either upon economic status or seeking civil justice after a tragedy, neither of which is a long-term solution.

Yet as part of the deregulatory fever which has gripped NHTSA, instead of writing safety standards, the agency is withdrawing rulemakings with known safety benefits, including updating event data recorders and requiring electronic throttle control to mitigate instances of sudden acceleration.

Auto safety is not now and should never be a partisan issue. The safety of our families and friends, our neighbors on the road, our dogs, pedestrians on our streets, the bicycles in our bike lanes, can be improved today through technology and congressional leadership. We greatly appreciate this committee shining your spotlight on an issue that impacts every single American. On behalf of our members across the country, the Center for Auto Safety stands ready to help you in these efforts.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Levine follows:]

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Ms. Schakowsky. And we will now begin the portion where members can ask questions. Each of us has 5 minutes, and I will -- I will begin.

Ms. Fennell, how quickly can a car reach dangerous temperatures on a warm day?

Ms. Fennell. I think it happens much more quickly than people understand. In fact, 80 percent of the heat that is going to accumulate in your car happen in the first 10 minutes. So by the time the child or anyone is in a car for as much as an hour, the temperature spiked as much as 40 to 50 degrees. And you can imagine, on an 80-degree day, how warm that vehicle gets.

Ms. Schakowsky. I wanted to ask you about the technology. As you know, right now, the HOT CARS Act does not specify any particular technology. Are some better than others, and what are the things that, in your view, ought to be basic essentials in any technology?

Ms. Fennell. Well, some of the technology out there is a very good start, but what really needs -- what we really need is something that detects the presence of a child, an animal, or any occupants that cannot get out of the car on their own. So what is needed is something that detects the presence of a living being, and that is available. We demonstrated it yesterday. So that really is what is needed to end this issue.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you.

Mr. Levine, I was told -- maybe I -- I wasn't able to see the technology. So I was told that something, one of them connected to the fob. I don't have a key to my car, but I have got a fob, which I never touch. It is in my purse. It opens the door. I can start the car. I don't ever touch it.

Have you heard of that? I mean, I want to say that that would not be sufficient

in any way if it only dealt with that kind of a notification. I am not so sure either about text messages or whatever. I am not looking at my phone all the time. And so when you think about the technologies, I am thinking about hot cars again, do you have any suggestions that we ought to take in mind?

Mr. Levine. Well, thank you for the question. I think that the first issue we have identified is we need to use technology to remind people that they make mistakes. We all make mistakes. No mistake should cause a tragedy.

Manufacturers are experimenting with different technologies, and I believe your fob vibrating is one of them. Text messaging is another one. The more important question is what is going to work, not just what is feasible. And so that is going to require some consumer testing. That is going to require some research study. But, obviously, the more audible the warning, the more visible, the more -- the more urgent that warning is, the more likely we are going to save lives.

So, you know, it is good to see experiments. Maybe it is all of those things combined. Maybe you are opting into some and some are mandatory. But you are right; if it is something that is not going to actually help you, then there is no point in having it, other than putting out an advertisement.

Ms. Schakowsky. Okay. I just want to go on record as saying the two things that you said, a text message or just going to the fob, I think is absolutely not sufficient. Wouldn't be for me.

I wanted to -- well, I think you have said, Ms. Fennell, how this legislation would help protect children in vehicle accidents, but what is your -- what is your priority in this legislation? What do you want to see happen? And are the technologies there now

that are sufficient to make children safe?

Ms. Fennell. Well, thank you for that question. And I want to piggyback a little bit on Mr. Levine's comment, because the systems that we are seeing today have redundancy. So if a child is locked in the car, it is really up to the OEM. Do they want them to be a loud horn? Do they want it to be a text message? They can choose how that person is alerted. And there is, you know, many different layers, if The OEM picks I want those two or those three. So, obviously, the more the better.

But there is software available now. It is called door sequencing. So if you open your back door within 10 minutes of leaving for your trip, when you arrive, you will get a little flash on your dashboard that says check the rear seat, and that -- we welcome that, but it doesn't say if there is a child in the car or not. And, for instance, if on your way to work, you know, you have opened that back door, you go and you stop for gas and you don't open that back door, when you arrive at work, you will not get that notification.

So what we really want to make sure is a system that can detect the presence of a living being and that there is redundancy built into the system.

Ms. Schakowsky. Okay. I have run out of time.

Mr. Shapiro, I thank you. And we can talk more. We had a little conversation, but I would like more.

But I just want to say -- my ranking member will -- that I just can't thank you enough, Miles and Carol, who have made their life's mission to prevent this tragedy that you have suffered so much. In the name of Chase, you are going to make a difference, and I look forward to working together to prevent others from suffering that way. So thank you once again.

I yield back.

And now I yield 5 minutes to the ranking member, Mrs. McMorris Rodgers.

Mrs. Rodgers. Thank you, Madam Chairman. And I share those thoughts.

I am curious, as a mom with three young kids, dealing with car seats every day, is there any technology related to an alarm system on the car seat itself?

Ms. Fennell. I can take that question. Yes, there are two car seats made by Evenflo that have technology built into them. They are a little bit higher priced than a regular car seat, but the problem we have with that is that nobody thinks this is going to happen to them. They may not want to pay that extra $5. So car seats, of course, is a welcome addition to some of the technology that is needed, but we really feel it should be vehicle-based. Because when you think about so many years ago, no one ever wanted an airbag and they wouldn't pay extra for that airbag. Now we, you know, fast-forward to today, who would ever buy a vehicle without an airbag?

So it does, you know, take time for those things to go through the turnover of the vehicle system, but we are really promoting vehicle-based and car seat as a backup.

Mrs. Rodgers. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Shapiro, in your testimony, you highlighted an entrepreneur, over 80 years old, who had a booth at CES, focused on preventing children, seniors, and even pets from being inadvertently left in cars. It also highlighted the benefits of self-driving cars for all facets of society. I have a son with special needs, Down syndrome, and I am really excited about what self-driving cars are going to mean for him and his future.

How do you see innovations helping us move toward safer roadways and saving lives? In other words, how can we address these auto safety issues through innovation

and technology-based solutions?

Mr. Shapiro. Thank you. We as an association have one fundamental mission, and it is focused on innovation and improving people's lives. So we are pretty passionate about it. And I think there is a role for industry, there is a role for consumer groups, and there is a role for government.

To me, the role of government is to, in a sense, encourage innovation and also create the regulatory guardrails so that we can proceed and also have competition, because competition -- there are so many solutions to this problem. We are seeing it in the competitive marketplace. You can see it in the patent filings. You can see it -- and it is not just about this issue.

To me, the bigger answer, in a sense, is, since it takes so long to get a rule, a rulemaking, a process to go forward, to get it implemented, the aging cars we have, the average is 12 years, young parents with kids aren't likely to buy a new car, the big -- the quicker answer to me is to get us to self-driving and the levels there as quickly as possible. Because if you think about self-driving, the advantage of that is, first of all, we obviously have fewer accidents and we are going -- I expect that we are going to start having it as soon as we have these steps to self-driving.

The second is -- and Ms. Fennell really hit home this point well for me -- is that part of the challenge is, is that we are away from our children by sitting in the front. It makes sense, from a safety point of view, while you are mobile; but with self-driving, that won't be necessary anymore. You will be -- most likely, you will be in the back with your kids, and that type of incidence will be helped, but we will also obviously have closing dividers.

And the other thing with self-driving, we will have -- by definition, self-driving cars, I believe, will have to be able to detect the- presence of beings, because there is not going to be a steering wheel in a future. You know, take a while to get there, and there is not going to be all the other things you have in a car, and you will have living environments, but they have to respond to the people that are in there. The people could have -- for example, what if the person in the car has a heart attack or something like that? The vehicle has to know that. So when you are in a self-driving vehicle, as a being of any age or size, the vehicle will know about that and presumably have some communication mechanism and ability to alert emergency or to go to a hospital, things like that.

So 25, 30 years from now, if we don't mess it up, if we -- if we proceed as fast as we can to stop those 30,000-plus deaths a years and hundreds of thousands of incidents, this issue also will be an issue of the past, and this will -- the horror that Mr. Harrison went through will never have to happen again. And that is why I think, in a sense, there is a dual path.

There is the legislation here that is now before you. Stand alone and you have to decide whether that is important enough to make it a priority in a way under any scenario will take several years, but also I would urge you to push the legislation this committee already passed unanimously so we can proceed as a country, instead of starting to get behind, where we have a national approach, we make it a national goal, and we get there, and then we eliminate well over 90 percent of deaths and injuries. And there are so many benefits from that.

Also, as a -- just trying to get kids around as a parent, I am looking forward to that.

Mrs. Rodgers. Thank you.

Now, I am very excited about self-driving cars on a number of fronts, although yesterday, I was told that they are also going to notify -- the potential of notifying you of when your weight goes up, which I am not sure I am excited about that.

Mr. Shapiro. We talked about that.

Ms. Schakowsky. We agree there.

Mrs. Rodgers. Thank you. I was -- yeah, I am out of time too.

I was interested, Mr. Harrison, just in hearing what technology you are most excited about, but maybe you can address that later. Thank you.

Mr. Harrison. Thank you, ma'am.

Mrs. Rodgers. I will yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. If I could, at the end, I want to ask a question about self-driving cars and algorithms that may inadvertently be discriminatory. So I will do that.

Mr. Cardenas is next for 5 minutes.

Mr. Cardenas. Thank you very much, Madam Chair and Ranking Member, for holding this very critical and important and emotional issue.

The loss of life, each life is very tragic, and the fact that we are such an amazing country with so much technology and so much ability to right these situations quicker than probably anywhere on the planet, I think this hearing is important that we hear about technology and we hear also about how dire that pain is when these tragedies occur.

For example, according to KidsAndCars, we lost 62 children from backover/frontover collisions. And, again, that is 62 too many. That is one too many, et cetera. And as a parent and a grandparent, it is this lens that I have now of being a

grandparent, it is even more critical to me, all of these issues.

The first question I would like to ask is to Ms. Fennell. What sorts of safety tips can parents and children follow to avoid a backover or frontover tragedy?

Ms. Fennell. Thank you very much for that question. What we tell parents is to make sure that you walk all the way around your vehicle before you ever move it, because there could be children behind or in front of the vehicle. And they tend -- when you are leaving, they want to come and give you a kiss goodbye. They just want to wave, and they don't understand that you may not be able to see them. So, you know, make sure that you walk all the way around.

And we also suggest, because this is very available, if you don't already have built-in cameras and things, you can get these aftermarket. Because so many people say to me all the time, oh, when I get a new car, I want to get one of those, you know, rearview cameras. I am, like, you don't have to wait. You can get that. It is pretty darn economical, and you just don't want to be backing blindly.

Mr. Cardenas. I think one thing the government can actually do is help subsidize retrofitting older vehicles with these devices so that it can become more prevalent more quickly. That could be something the government could encourage and invest in saving lives. That is one aspect. So thank you for sharing that with us. And you are not just talking to us; you are talking to the American people right now. So thank you for sharing that knowledge.

I would also like to thank you, Miles Harrison, for sharing what it is like to go through what you have gone through. Chase, we all wish he we were here with us, but you and Carol are here with us and you are dedicating your lives to unborn children, to

families who have yet to have children, and all of us who have precious little ones in our lives.

I think that your courage and your willingness to allow yourself to be so confronted with this pain every day in front of all of us and the public proves that you are innocent. It proves that what you went through in that trial was an overburden by our society that, in my opinion, was not necessary. And as a Christian myself, I notice that you mentioned that you have yet to forgive yourself. Well, I am of the feeling and the opinion that forgiveness was not something that you needed, because from where I come from, forgiveness is something that you get later after something. I do not think that you were required forgiveness because you didn't do anything in malice. You loved Chase, that is obvious. And I admire you for your strength.

I just hope and pray that we as representatives of the people, of the people's House will do our job and to show the amount of strength and the responsibility and the energy and the time that we and our staffs should put forth to make these solutions more real as quickly as possible. Because every day that goes by, this could and does happen in America. So, again, thank you for your courage and thank you for being here.

And, Carol, thank you for sharing your words with me and giving me advice. And there are many, many things that we can do, and hopefully, we will do them as quickly as possible.

I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you.

I now yield to Mr. Latta for 5 minutes.

Mr. Latta. I thank you, Madam Chair. Again, thanks for having today's hearing.

And, Mr. Shapiro, if I could ask you my first question, and, again, going back to self-drive technology. And, you know, when we worked on the legislation last year, we wanted to make sure that safety was always first, last, and always. We wanted to make sure that we had cyber security being built in the vehicles, that we also had privacy, making sure that those concerns were addressed. And also, with the issues with our senior citizens who are no longer mobile, that they would have the ability to get out again; our friends that had disabilities, that they had the opportunity, that they were able to be mobile and to go to a job. Just like Mr. Harper, who was our vice chairman at the time; his son has a disability, and he said that if he or his wife weren't home, that they wouldn't be able to get him to work each day, and why it is so important.

And in 2016, the Department of Transportation had the competition for a Smart City Challenge out there for innovative and smart solutions that could occur out there, and the city of Columbus won, in Ohio, because they were wanting to address the alarmingly high rate of infant mortality that they had in the city.

And I would like to ask you, do you see more communities integrating self-driving vehicles and their services to address more community concerns out there, and what those concerns could be addressed by?

Mr. Shapiro. Yes, thank you for that question. Smart cities is a very vital part of our future for so many different reasons. It goes to resiliency. It goes to energy efficiency, being green. It goes to having near you everything you need in serving populations, especially as we are moving to cities. It is not just the United States, around the world, whereas 40 or 50 years ago, two-thirds of us lived outside cities, soon two-thirds of us will live in cities.

So smart cities themselves, what they do is they -- the structure changes, even how you build the city, how many parking spaces you have, how people get around, and micro transportation and options and everything else. But what we see with self-driving cars, that is a vital part. And Ford, recently at CES, the CEO presented a vision of a smart city and showed how you redesign the city and you use self-driving cars to get around, and it just changes everything.

And, obviously, what goes away are so many things that we are spending money on today, both as a government and as people, in terms of if you don't have -- if you have self-driving cars, if you get rid of 90 percent or more of collisions, it is not only the 30,000, 40,000 people that die, it is the hundreds of thousands, if not millions, that are injured. It is the cost. It is the auto insurance cost, the collision repair cost. There are so many things that change fundamentally.

And you actually need fewer cars in a city, which in theory, should cut down on congestion. You need less parking in a city, and all of a sudden green spaces open up. So this is -- the way we actually have CES in Las Vegas is we actually have smart cities and we have a lot of self-driving right nearby because it is just part of what it is. And a lot of the demonstration projects we are seeing in the beginning are self-driving vehicles on a -- on a course -- on an area -- a community, a business entity area, a residential community for older people, where you have smart-driving vehicles -- self-driving vehicles actually going around. So, yes, it changes everything, and that is where we are heading as a world.

You know, some of us would just like to have timed traffic lights, but we have to go much, much further and much quicker. And that is where the government has a

major role to end this tragedy on our highways. There are so many things we will do with self-driving cars, and we are getting closer every year.

I honestly don't think this is happy talk. This is real. There is demonstrations. I have been in several self-driving cars myself, and they are safer and they are better and they will solve this problem totally.

Mr. Levine. Well, thank you.

Let me go on. You know, with the SELF DRIVE Act that I introduced with our chair in the last Congress, and it passed the House unanimously, could you also explain some, how -- when we are talking about how it can improve the highway safety -- I know you touched on it a little bit, but really get into a little more detail on how we can make these roads safer out there, because of 37,000 lives we lost last year alone.

Mr. Shapiro. Well, what we are seeing in consumers, one, is -- and the Act will help -- is make it a national approach. Right now, if you want to go to California in a self-driving car to Nevada, you literally have to change your license plate at the border. That is not how we operate as a country. That is not what -- I mean, one of our competitive advantages over Europe, frankly, is the fact that we have one language, one land, and the rules which -- affecting vehicles are really more on licensing and things like that.

So the self-driving act does so many different things to allow testing, to encourage testing to move us forward, but what we are seeing -- and I want to get this point out, if I may, Madam Chair -- is that consumers have chosen -- the biggest surprise that I had at the end of 1998 is when -- because we -- I am sorry -- 2018, is that when we issue our annual statistics and forecasts, we had to raise by a billion dollars what Americans are

spending on car electronics.

And I dug deep and I said, why is this? What did we get wrong a year ago? And what we got wrong was Americans' desire to load up their cars with safety options, that are going to dealerships, and all these things which lead us to self-driving, going to Level 2 and Level 3, they want that in their cars. So they are choosing, actually, with their pocketbooks to get these features. And that bodes really well for investment by the car companies. It bodes well for what consumers wants.

Mr. Levine. Thank you very much.

Madam Chair, my time has expired, and I yield back. And I appreciate your indulgence.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you.

Congresswoman Blunt Rochester, you have 5 minutes.

Ms. Blunt Rochester. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, for calling this important hearing on summer driving dangers.

I first want to say to Ms. Fennell, thank you so much for sharing your story and for the work that you are doing.

I thank all of the panelists for your testimony.

I especially want to say something to Mr. and Mrs. Harrison. As a parent, I sit before you and think about all the parents across the country, all the families. And I think about the fact that how I got to this position was unexpectedly being widowed at the age of 52. And I am from the State of Delaware, and I remember being in the hospital that day and our Vice President called and said, may the day come when your loved one's name brings a smile to your face before a tear to your eye.

And as I see you cry those tears, I want you both to know that Chase is here, you are creating a legacy for him, and there will be a day when we pass these bills and you will be able to smile, smile broadly, and know that your work is not in vein and that you turned your pain into purpose. So thank you so much for sharing. Thank you for staying on the battlefield.

And thank you all for the work that you are doing. Just wanted you to know that.

Now I am going to take a breath and turn to my questions. For my State in Delaware, automobile safety is very important. And I would like to echo Chairman Pallone's opening that it is fitting that we are having this hearing Memorial Day weekend. Delaware saw approximately 9 million visitors in 2017, and some of those visitors, vehicle safety was crucial to saving their lives, their children, pedestrians, and families.

We also have the major I95 corridor that goes up and down the East Coast, So this is really important. And Delaware saw 119 automobile-related fatalities in 2017, which was greater than the previous 2 years. So this is important, this discussion, not just to Delaware, but to our country.

And I want to ask my first question to Mr. Levine. Thank you, again, for your testimony. We all agree that these technologies have the potential to radically change the automobile travel in our country and safety, but I am concerned that access to these lifesaving technologies is sometimes determined, in large part, by income. If you could talk to us about the fact that, you know, you have these things like land departure warnings, backup cameras, and things like that that are all also sold as like luxury item packages. They are put in as upgrades. And I understand that JD Power, in 2015, the

study said that consumers are willing to pay for safety features but up to a certain limit.

And so if you could just talk about how widespread this is, this issue of bundling these things. And do you believe that safety enhancing features as part of an expensive add-on or bundle discourages consumers from buying these safety features?

Mr. Levine. Thank you for the question. And I think the short answer is, yes, it does. We have a history of the auto industry very successfully taking longer than probably is necessary once safety technology has met a certain level of performance requirements in terms of seeing it as a standard, and has used that interim time to sell it as a luxury feature.

We need to look no further than the backup cameras, which took 10 years from the moment at which they were readily available in terms of the technology and reasonably priced in terms of integrating it into the system, until they became mandatory. And during that period of time, all of a sudden it became part of a leather seat package, a moon roof package that really undercuts the ability for everyone to prevent that awful mistake.

Ms. Blunt Rochester. And should NHTSA be doing more to require safety features on all new vehicles? I have 43 seconds, and anybody can jump in also, if there are ideas to help consumers to be able to access these features.

Mr. Levine. Real quick, there is a number of existing mandates over at NHTSA in terms of safety rules that they could move forward very quickly and some other things that they could start the process of to move things forward to get everyone the safety devices.

Ms. Blunt Rochester. I have 27 seconds.

Ms. Fennell. I would like to just say there is a pending rule for rear seatbelt reminders that would save thousands and thousands of lives. We know a reminder for putting on your seatbelt will help. We tell everyone to put their children in the backseat, but there is not a reminder back there. It should have been finished in October of 2015. It has not even been started yet.

Ms. Blunt Rochester. I yield back the balance of my time. And thank you so much.

Ms. Schakowsky. Thank you,

Mr. Buchson, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Buchson. Thank you very much.

And thank you for all your testimony.

You know, one of the most common things we are having trouble with now is distracted driving from cell phone usage, right? I have four kids. They are 26, 24, 21, and 15. Three of them drive, one is going to. Is there any technology right now that could prevent people from being on their phone when they are driving?

Ms. Fennell, I will start with you, and then Mr. Shapiro, I guess, whoever feels like they can answer that question the best.

I mean, we have to go -- you know, they asked -- I can't remember -- Willie Horton, why do you rob banks? He said, that is where the money is.

And so this is one of the biggest problems that we have in our country are distracted driving by everyone really. Is there something we can do about it?

Mr. Levine. So I will start. I mean, there are a number of technologies that are being tested that either can disable phone use inside the vehicle. Obviously, there is

some consumer acceptance concerns of that, because if you are not the driver, there is a level of I want to be able to still use my phone. So there is a weighing of the safety --

Mr. Buchson. Can I make a quick comment? My dad, he died at age 84, and he never put his seatbelt on. So he was resistant to that.

So we still mandated seatbelts in automobiles, right?

Mr. Levine. So we are -- you know, we would be okay with that. I am just, you know --

Ms. Blunt Rochester. I understand.

Mr. Levine. -- explaining part of the reason. And there is other -- there is aftermarket technology. The phones themselves have the technology. I think we also need an ability to have a larger conversation, which this committee has started and continues, on the idea of how terribly dangerous distracted driving is. I think people still think it is not the same thing as drinking or being on drugs or other distractions. It is equally as deadly.

Mr. Buchson. Anybody else have any comments?

Mr. Shapiro. Sure. The increase in driving deaths is troubling, and part of it can be attributed to lower gas prices and the fact that people are driving more, the economy is doing better, but not all of it. And definitely, there is a distracted driving issue.

I think we did a really good job several years ago of alerting people to it. We had a lot of public education campaigns. We worked very hard on it. I think companies like Apple and other cell phone companies have said, you know, you have to punch in "I am not driving," especially -- even if you are a passenger, and that is a good solution. But the -- it seems that the nature of the technology such that it becomes more urgent

and it is almost like you get a little hormone thing, it is difficult not to answer.

And then there are solutions coming a little bit quicker. The smart speaker is migrating to the car, and that allows you to use your voice, if you will, as a medium, rather than looking down and using your hands. You can have your e-mails and other things read to you. There is a lot of different things there.

And also there is, frankly, these passive and active reminders that are increasingly in cars that tell you if you have gone over the line. It vibrates your seat or makes a noise, and these are solutions. And the advantage of these being introduced the way they are by the car companies is consumers are becoming, not only comfortable with them, but they want them. Yes, they do have to pay more for them in the beginning, but there is a competitive marketplace in the beginning as to which ideas win, how they can perfect it. And there is an economy of scale which, as you make more of these and the right ones survive, they go down dramatically in cost.

So the government, I think, and your job as Congress, is to figure out that fine line between mandating something that could be cost effective for everyone and not impose a huge cost that would cost a lot more to buy a car, and going the other way and saying, wait a second. We will just leave this to the free marketplace forever. These safety devices may have value but not enough to mandate.

So you have to figure out that balance line. I would urge that competition, especially for new products being introduced, publicize, get them out there, see which ones are the best, and see how consumers react to them. But we have a lot of solutions coming as we get to the holy grail, which is the self-driving car.

Mr. Buchson. All right. I will follow up with you on another question, Mr.

Shapiro.

Most rural parts of this country -- I represent a lot of rural areas -- people have to travel great distances to receive medical care. So this is a potential area of self-driving that could really be beneficial, right. The closest hospital may be the next town over, and specialists may be hundreds of miles away.

Can you talk about maybe how self-driving vehicles, not only just for convenience, but actually for things like going to see a doctor or -- especially for rural parts of America, how it might benefit people more broadly as it relates to that?

Mr. Shapiro. That is a hugely important point, Congressman. I appreciate you raising it. Rural America is not well-served by a lot of our whole U.S. infrastructure today, and it is a challenge. Self-driving cars clearly will make a difference because that will provide for -- especially for a lot of -- a large portion of elderly people cannot drive even, and it will allow them to be served and serviced.

And also, since we have such an active group that is proceeding so quickly in technology, telemedicine is increasingly big, and we need to break down barriers for that as well. You shouldn't always have to get into a car to see your doctor. We have found in our own operation, for example, that if you just let people talk to a doctor, they may not have to go to the emergency room. But yet you will serve, not only all the elderly people, rural people, people with disabilities and others, and they need to be empowered. We shouldn't have such a large percentage of our population eliminated from the services we can provide to get them healthy, to see things, and do things.

Mr. Buchson. Thank you very much. I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. Mr. Carter, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. Carter. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And I thank all of you for being here this very important subject.

Mr. Harrison, thank you especially. I can only imagine the pain, but I want you to know that your courage is an inspiration to all of us. And thank you. Thank you for being here.

Mr. Shapiro, let me ask you, and kind of to follow up on Dr. Bucshon's questions about distracted driving. You know, we concentrate a lot of times on DWI and impaired driving, but distracted driving is a big problem. I mean, we have all experienced it. And, listen, I am as bad as anybody, I admit, and I need to do better with that.

But distracted driving, as we get -- as we have more of this, and we do have more of it, because we are -- we are a society now that is -- you got to have it right now. I mean, the phone rings, you have got to answer it right now. You know, you get an e-mail, you have got to answer it right now. And that is just the kind of society we are right now.

Are there any -- any ways to educate and incentivize drivers like me that are distracted to change our behavior?

Mr. Shapiro. I don't know about incentivizing you, because I don't want to violate any ethics rules, but in terms of -- there is a huge number of innovative technological solutions that people are selling. For example, let's say your teenager, you want to track what they are doing and how they are driving, you can. Insurance companies will increasingly say you can get a lower rate if we could put -- you know, track your driving for a while or always, to see whether --

Mr. Carter. There is a financial --

Mr. Shapiro. There are some marketplace things out there and there is a lot of self -- there is a lot of technology. Increasingly, for example, there is technology which monitors your eyes. And if your eyes are away from the road for more than a couple of seconds, it sends off an alert. There is that, as I said, if you go over the line, increasingly in a large number of cars you get a passive indication, your wheel vibrates, or your seat vibrates. So there is a noise which lets you know you have done that.

So there is a lot of solutions out there, just as -- but, you know, the fact that there are technological solutions doesn't mean they are activated. For example, drunk driving, we have known how to cure drunk driving for 30 years. We know you could test someone before they start their car, and we have chosen -- not we. We collectively as government and people have chosen not to implement that.

But I think we need to do more in public awareness. I think we need to do more in terms of publicizing these things that are out there, and I think the insurance companies have their role to play. But, yeah, it is definitely a problem. And there is different State laws. Like if you are at one of these lights here in Virginia where our organization is, you could wait there for 2 minutes, and how could you resist looking at your device. But in some States, that is illegal.

Mr. Carter. Right, right. And in the State of Georgia we have made it illegal, or the legislature has passed legislation to make it illegal, and I welcome that. I think it is necessary, and certainly, we have got to change that. I understand.

You have talked a lot about self-driving cars, Mr. Shapiro, and that is obviously the wave of the future. What do you see as the most impactful technologies that are coming out there? I mean, if I had to -- if you had to list, you know, this is really going to

be a game changer, is there something like that out there?

Mr. Shapiro. Well, self-driving cars is the answer, but there is many steps to get to the answer. It is not digital where you are either there or you are not. I mean, it is easier to do in climates where there aren't snow and hail and rain and things like that, and there is so many things and steps and different companies along the way that have to do things really, really well to make this work. I mean, we have the camera technologies got down dramatically. Some of the new cars today have several cameras on them, but someone has to process that.

And, for example, there is something called LIDAR, which is very expensive. It is a couple thousand dollars now, but that really allows -- like cameras aren't the only answer, although Tesla takes the approach that cameras are the only the answer. The problem is that cameras do not really work that well at night, and they see two dimensionally. LIDAR actually picks up where cameras wear off.

So I am not going to say there is one answer. I am going to say the answer is redundancy and making sure that cars are safe.

Mr. Carter. Let me ask you this. Not to interrupt you, but let me ask you. I have got my truck. You know, it is a 2004. It has got 408,000 miles on it. I mean, obviously, it doesn't have any of this technology. Is there any kind of aftermarket technology that can be applied? Because the average -- the average person keeps a car for, what, 10-1/2, 11 years?

Mr. Shapiro. It is about almost approaching 12 years now. And you are absolutely right; this is going to be an evolution over years, and there will be aftermarket solutions, but I do not know if there will be total solutions. So the question is -- but if

we have -- it is like think of the measles vaccine, if you will. The higher percentage of self-driving cars we get out there, the safer everyone is.

Mr. Carter. Right.

Mr. Shapiro. And how we address the last 10 or 15, 20 percent, I think there should be some good, healthy discussion. It could be those car -- your car might have, even though it is old, might have higher insurance premiums on it because you are less safe than everyone else.

So we will get to those problems. Those are not the big problems. I think the issue is how do we get this legislation passed, which came out of this committee the last Congress, bipartisan unanimously. How do we get it so we are working as a country towards a goal? And that goal, in my view, could be clearly stated by X date, we have X number of fewer percentage deaths. And that is what we should be doing in the country.

Mr. Carter. Well, thank you again.

Thank you all for being here.

And I yield back.

Ms. Schakowsky. I would like to thank all of our witnesses for their participation in today's hearing.

We have some documents to submit for the record. I request unanimous consent to enter them into the record. I will read them. A letter from Securing America's Future Energy; a letter from the United States Chamber of Commerce's Technology Engagement Center; a statement from Jennifer Huddleston and Ryan Skorup, research fellows from the merchant -- no, Mercatus -- I am sorry -- Mercatus Center at

George Mason University; a letter from Marc Scribner from Competitive Enterprise Institute; a statement of Catherine Chase, president of the advocate -- Advocates for Highway Safety Auto -- and Auto Safety; a letter from the National Security Council.

Without objection, I would like to insert them into the record.

Hearing none, so ordered.

[The information follows:]

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

Ms. Schakowsky. I remind members that pursuant to committee rules, they have 10 business days to submit additional questions for the record to be answered by the witnesses who have appeared. I ask each witness to respond promptly to any such questions that you may receive.

And at this time, the subcommittee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:28 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]