

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Gus Bilirakis**  
**CPAC Subcommittee Hearing on**  
**“Promises and Perils: The Potential of Automobile**  
**Technologies”**  
**May 18, 2021**

*As prepared for delivery*

Good morning everyone. Thank you, Madam Chair, for holding this important hearing and thank you to today’s panel for your testimony. I am eager to hear your perspectives.

You all know I am from Florida, and many of my colleagues would associate that with the NASA program. The goals set by our space program and the partnership with businesses to serve those needs has had a transformational impact on our economy and our daily lives. It has led to many benefits from image sensors in mobile phones, to hearing aids, and improved radial tires.

I feel much the same way about the topic of the hearing today. When we think about automotive technologies, the conversation is really about the future of autonomous vehicles. It is important to say “the future of” because there is an

assumption that these vehicles are already being sold today. They most certainly are not.

However, by designing our own moonshot framework for AVs, we can set the industry on the path to a fully autonomous vehicle that is still many years away. The importance of that goal though is so many advancements will be born along the way that will make current generation cars safer and force us to rethink how vehicle designs should evolve.

The U.S. must seek that highest form of autonomy so we can reap all those benefits along the way. Without that, many of the innovations won't be developed by us and our economy and society will be at a loss. Nearly 40,000 people die each year in traffic accidents, and in almost every case, the denominator is the same – human error. The preventable loss of life on our roads is tragic and unacceptable.

The AV ecosystem will also go beyond increasing the safety of our roads. It has the potential to transform the lives of seniors and those living with disabilities. Every advancement will connect these communities that feel cut off from everyday routines many take for granted. That means the benefits go

beyond safety, it really means opportunity and accessibility. We have already seen real examples of how our future could be impacted. During the pandemic, AVs transported COVID-19 tests at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida. This was occurring at a crucial time and demonstrates the real-world impact we should be embracing.

Again, I do want to be clear. Fully autonomous vehicles are not in our market today, and they won't be tomorrow. We must develop a framework, so they are safely tested and deployed, and in doing so educate the public during this transition period of what is occurring in these adaptive technologies. For that reason, I wanted to specifically call out Professor Rajkumar (Raj-Koo-Mar) from Carnegie Mellon University who is with us today. The professor is a respected authority on the topic and deals with the facts and myths of this future technology.

I believe so much in being objective with the public on this that it led me to introduce [H.R. XXXX], the "Raising Objectivity standards in Advertising Driving Systems" or the "ROADS Act." H.R. [XXXX] would look at ways to most effectively communicate how to educate consumers about the

capabilities and limitations of advanced driver-assistance systems by examining how manufacturers advertise, disclose, label, and name their vehicles' driving systems.

Current vehicle descriptions such as “Autopilot” can mislead consumers into thinking their cars have self-driving capabilities which they do not. Much to the way the public had to understand how anti-lock brakes work, they need to understand the benefits and limitations of the current generation of technologies, and that certainly begins with properly describing them.

I am hopeful today serves to move forward with several priorities that this committee has in the automotive space. It will be such a shame if we miss the opportunity to pass bipartisan legislation that can be included in broader efforts moving this Congress.

Thank you again, Madam Chair. I yield back.