



October 7, 2019

Honorable Debbie Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
116 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Dingell:

We write to express our support for HR 4354, the Honoring Abbas Family Legacy to Terminate Drunk Driving Act (HALT Act), and to thank you for your leadership on this important legislation. Safe Kids Worldwide is a grass roots network of more than 420 coalitions across the nation with the mission of preventing unintentional child injury. It is the number one killer of children. The safety of children in and around cars are among our top priorities and child fatalities that occur when a drunk driver is behind the wheel are tragedies which can be prevented.

Technology has been one of the tools to enhance motor vehicle safety in addition to aggressive public education and strong, vigorously enforced laws governing the rules of the road. A child passenger restraint system is a classic example of a proven, carefully engineered intervention to keep kids safe in a car. Similarly, the federal government has partnered with the auto industry to develop a system that can passively test the level of a driver's intoxication, and when a driver alcohol level exceeds the legal limit, the motor vehicle is disabled. We believe advanced alcohol detection technology should be a basic part of a motor vehicle's safety system. It would have a profound impact on reducing traffic deaths.

There are several implications of drunk driving that uniquely place a child at risk in a car. First, an impaired driver is less likely to place a child in an occupant protection system and more likely to install it incorrectly. Second, an impaired driver is more likely to cause a fatal crash, killing a child, whether it's the driver of the car in which a child is a passenger or a drunk driver who hits a car with a child passenger.

It was the second scenario which inspired you to introduce the HALT Act. In January 2019, the Abbas family of Dearborn, Michigan was traveling to Florida for the Christmas holiday. In Georgetown, Kentucky, a driver with a reported BAC level of .306, four times the legal limit, crossed into the opposite lane and collided head-on with the Abbas's car. Five members of the family died, including three children: Ali (13), Isabelle (12) and Giselle (7). If the .306 blood content level was detected and technology caused the vehicle to be inoperable, the driver would not have been on the road that night.

Each year, more than 10,000 deaths occur because of drunk drivers—roughly 30 percent of all fatal crashes—and we believe advanced alcohol detection technology should be required in every new vehicle. Congresswoman Dingell, we stand ready to help you in your effort to pass the HALT bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anthony Green".

Anthony Green
Chief Officer for Advocacy and Network