

September 25, 2020

The Honorable Roger Wicker, Chairman
The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wicker and Ranking Member Cantwell:

We are writing to convey our support for the *Reduce Impaired Driving for Everyone Act of 2019*, S. 2604, which is sponsored by Committee Members Senators Rick Scott (R-FL) and Tom Udall (D-NM). This vital legislation and similar legislation, the *Honoring Abbas Family Legacy to Terminate Drunk Driving Act* or *HALT Drunk Driving Act*, H.R. 4354, as well as a provision in the *Moving Forward Act*, H.R. 2, have the potential to advance innovative technological solutions to reduce incidence of impaired driving. Alcohol-impaired driving is a persistent traffic safety issue that has contributed to nearly one-third of all traffic fatalities annually over the past decade, and passive technological solutions are gravely needed. We urge the Committee to consider this legislation.

The statistics of alcohol-impaired driving are alarming. In 2018, 10,511 people were killed in crashes involving a drunk driver.ⁱ Each day on average, nearly 30 people die in alcohol-impaired driving crashes resulting in a fatality occurring every 50 minutes.ⁱⁱ In addition to the loss of life, debilitating injuries and devastation to families and communities, these crashes also amount to a staggering \$44 billion in economic costs and \$210 billion in comprehensive costs to society.

Repetition of this deadly behavior is a serious issue. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), adult drivers drank too much and got behind the wheel approximately 111 million times in 2016, which equates to more than 300,000 incidents of drinking and driving each day. Research has shown that about one-third of all drivers arrested or convicted of drunk driving are repeat offenders.ⁱⁱⁱ Arrest data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation reveals that an average drunk driver has driven drunk over 80 times before a first arrest.^{iv} Developing technology to prevent drivers from operating a vehicle while impaired could radically alter this deadly scenario.

According to research from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) released in July, *Potential lives saved by in-vehicle alcohol detection systems*, impaired driving prevention technology could yield considerable benefits. IIHS finds that alcohol-detection systems could save upwards of 9,000 lives a year in the U.S., accounting for more than 25 percent of road fatalities. Given these potential gains for public health and traffic safety, it is understandable that public support is strong for these systems and has been established for quite some time. Finding a technological solution that balances safety and privacy interests could garner additional support from all stakeholders and allow for more saturation in the marketplace. If more vehicles are equipped with this technology, deaths from impaired driving could decrease. Accelerating research and testing of this type of technology is best accomplished through federal regulation to set minimum performance standards, as is directed by S. 2604.

Far too many lives are lost and families irrevocably altered by impaired driving. The widespread adoption of vehicle safety technology to prevent impaired driving could play a significant role in decreasing incidence and the resultant suffering. We urge you to advance S. 2604 to accelerate progress in deploying technological solutions to reduce impaired driving and engender meaningful reductions in crashes, fatalities and injuries.

Sincerely,

Allstate Insurance Company
American Family Mutual Insurance Company
Amica Mutual Insurance Company
Farmers Insurance
Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America
Liberty Mutual Insurance
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies
National Association of Professional Insurance Agents
Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company
NJM Insurance Group
Selective Insurance Group
State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company
USAA

cc: Members of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Members of the U.S. Senate
Members of the U.S. House

ⁱ Traffic Safety Facts, 2018 Fatal Motor Vehicle Crashes: Overview, NHTSA, Oct. 2019, DOT HS 812 826.

ⁱⁱ *Id.*

ⁱⁱⁱ Fell, Jim. "Repeat DWI Offenders in the United States." Washington, DC: National Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Traffic Tech No. 85, February 1995.

^{iv} Arrest data: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Crime in the United States: 2014" <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/tables/table-29> Incidence data: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Alcohol-Impaired Driving Among Adults — United States, 2012." Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. August 7, 2015 / 64(30);814-817.