



Preventing accidental injury.

April 13, 2010

The Honorable James L. Oberstar, Chairman, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar:

On behalf of Safe Kids USA, I want to express our appreciation for your sponsorship of H.B. 4714, the reauthorization bill for the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). **Safe Kids strongly supports full funding of the NTSB in order for the agency to fulfill its critical mission to protect Americans from transportation-related accidents.**

As you know, some Members of Congress have proposed significant cuts in funding levels, and such a reduction would result in a decrease in current NTSB staffing levels. Full funding of the NTSB would enable the agency to achieve its optimal staffing level of 477 FTEs, a critical element in order to ensure the continued success of the agency. A fully staffed NTSB would allow the agency to further examine the accidents on our nation's roads and in turn, provide safety recommendations so that future incidents could be prevented.

While the NTSB is most recognized for their accident investigations, Safe Kids knows the agency and its staff as a vibrant, dedicated partner in the public health arena. We have long worked with the NTSB to promote child passenger safety through our Safe Kids Buckle Up program. With motor vehicle crashes being the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for children ages 2 to 14, we consider the NTSB to be a vital resource in protecting children both in and around cars. Through the agency's Advocacy Center and the *Most Wanted List of Transportation Safety Improvements*, the NTSB has often been the catalyst for pushing other government agencies and non-profit organizations to do the right thing when it comes to motor vehicle safety.

In fact, the NTSB can rightfully lay claim to enhancing the safety legislative landscape. The NTSB is considered to be an authoritative and credible voice in the traffic safety community. Accordingly, its vocal support has helped lead to the enactment of numerous child booster seat laws and primary enforcement safety belt laws. These laws increase the use of restraints by all passengers and we know that the increased use of car seats and safety belts saves lives and prevents injuries. The NTSB also led the way in helping organizations like ours establish permanent fitting stations that give parents the opportunity to have their child safety seats installed in cars correctly, at no cost, by trained technicians. Unfortunately, far too many parents install child safety seats incorrectly, which expose their children to unnecessary risk. These fitting stations have helped lower misuse rates, and due to the NTSB's efforts, there are now hundreds of permanent inspections sites around the country.

The NTSB is one of our most trusted partners in helping to keep kids safe. We very much appreciate your efforts to keep this important agency strong. If Safe Kids USA can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202/662-0606 or Stephanie Russell, Public Policy Associate, at 202/662-0608. Thank you for your leadership on this important safety initiative.

Sincerely,

Tanya Chin Ross
Senior Public Policy Associate

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