



# Motor Vehicle Safety Trends

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# **2007 Highway Fatalities – Real Progress or Just the Recession?**

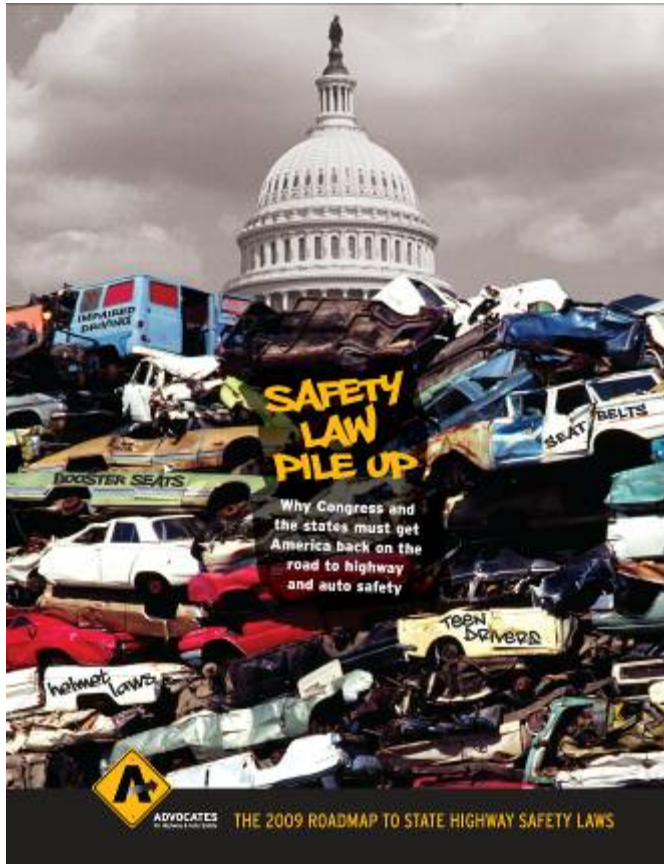
- Recent decreases in deaths and injuries may be a reflection of high gasoline prices and a weak economy and not a steady and sustained downward trend
- Past recessions and weak economies have resulted in fewer highway deaths and injuries
- A weak economy should not be our best safety countermeasure to unacceptable highway deaths and injuries



# **Unfinished Safety Agenda**

Safer Drivers and Safer Vehicles

# Lifesaving Laws Languish in State Legislatures



## Every state lacks basic traffic safety laws

- 25 states need a primary enforcement seat belt law
- 30 states lack an all-rider motorcycle helmet law
- 29 states need an optimal booster seat law covering children through age 7
- 49 states and DC have gaps in teen driving or Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws
- 36 states and DC have weak impaired driving laws

[www.saferoads.org/2009-roadmap-state-highway-safety-laws](http://www.saferoads.org/2009-roadmap-state-highway-safety-laws)



# Motor Vehicle Safety Standards Save Lives

- Vehicle safety technologies saved an estimated 328,551 lives from 1960 to 2002
- More lives being saved by seat belts and air bags
- More lives being lost to rollovers and motorcycle crashes



# Motor Vehicle Safety Trends

- I. When Congress Acts, NHTSA Reacts
- II. Recent Vehicle Safety Standards Required by Congress
- III. Saving the Environment and Saving Lives
- IV. Safety Technology - Solutions or Problems



# I. When Congress Acts, NHTSA Reacts

- Bi-partisan legislation in Congress has compelled NHTSA to issue motor vehicle safety standards
- The 111th Congress will create new opportunities for advancing highway and auto safety
- New Chairs and Members on key House and Senate Committees
- New leaders in the White House and U.S. DOT



## II. Recent Vehicle Safety Standards Required by Congress

### ○ SAFETEA-LU Rules

- Over 10,000 rollover deaths annually
- ESC and roof strength rules are weak
- Roof strength rule has been delayed until April 30, 2009
- Ejection Prevention rule to be issued by October 1, 2009



## II. Recent Vehicle Safety Standards Required by Congress (*cont.*)

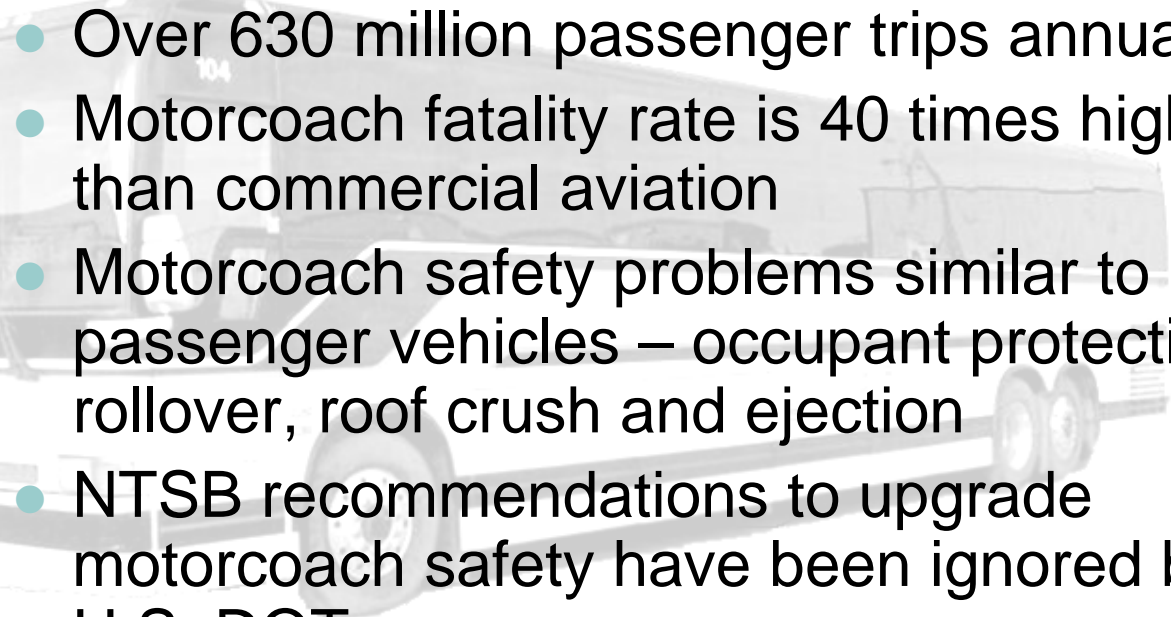
### ○ Cameron Gulbransen Rules

- Over 200 people killed annually in backover crashes and 14,000 more are injured
- Blind zone rule
  - NPRM – February 2009
  - Final rule – February 2011
- Auto reverse in power windows
  - NPRM – August 2009
  - Final Decision – August 2010



## II. Recent Vehicle Safety Standards Required by Congress (*cont.*)

### ○ Congress Ready to Direct More Safety Rules

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- Over 630 million passenger trips annually
  - Motorcoach fatality rate is 40 times higher than commercial aviation
  - Motorcoach safety problems similar to passenger vehicles – occupant protection, rollover, roof crush and ejection
  - NTSB recommendations to upgrade motorcoach safety have been ignored by U.S. DOT



### III. Saving the Environment and Saving Lives

- National goals to encourage walking and biking need to be matched by national efforts to improve safety
- Pedestrian deaths and injuries are still too high - children and older Americans at risk
- No NHTSA leadership to require safer vehicle designs for pedestrians



### **III. Saving the Environment and Saving Lives: New Vehicle Mix**

- Compatibility and occupant protection
- Alternative fuel vehicles – hybrid, all-electric, hydrogen and biomass – may pose new safety risks



## IV. Safety Technology – Solutions and Problems

- Distracted driving is a growing problem
- Research shows that cell phone use – hand-held and hands free – is high risk behavior
- Drivers who use cell phones are 4 times more likely to be in a crash while using it
- Similar to impaired driving, behavioral change is not enough and technology will be part of the solution



# Conclusion

- Safety is Positive for other priorities of the Obama Administration – the Economy and Health Care Reform
- Annual motor vehicle crashes cost more than \$230 billion, or \$800 per person
- Reducing motor vehicle deaths and injuries will contribute to affordable and available health care