

**Statement of Syndi Ecker**  
**July 21, 2005**

I am speaking out today not as a Republican or as a Democrat but as a woman, a mother, and a concerned American citizen.

Until three years ago I was a complete and blessed woman who spent each day expressing my gratitude for my life as a wife, the mother of two beautiful girls, and a fulfilling career. On March 3, 2002, my life experienced a drastic change. My 22-year-old daughter, Amy, and her Pepperdine University classmate were returning to college where they were pursuing degrees in preparation for medical school after a wonderful spring break. Amy had invited her new friend from Texas to her home in the central coast to show off the beauty of the place that she loved.

They were two ordinary young women with extraordinary ambitions, values, and faith. After attending a church service in our home town, the two girls began their journey back to school. Amy had called me to share her experience at the church she had grown up in and the people she knew and loved from there. Just an hour into the drive, Amy was talking on her cell phone with me about the visit while her friend drove, and all of the sudden she said, "Oh my God, oh crap." These were her last words.

In that instant, the Ford Explorer that Amy's friend had been driving lost control on an open stretch of roadway. The rear tire had veered off the road into the inner shoulder, just twelve inches from the yellow line. The unstable vehicle rolled over up to six times. The roof, door, and safety belt Amy was wearing failed, exposing Amy's upper body and allowing her head to make contact with the asphalt. She was killed in an instant, leaving our family to learn a new way of life.

I have since learned about the tragic numbers of Americans who are killed by the auto industry's reluctance to make vehicle safety a priority. We honor people like the astronauts who have been killed while up in space. Please let Amy's life, as well as all the other Americans who have died on our highways or been injured by the lack of regard for human life on the part of the auto industry, have a purpose.

The Senate has approved H.R.3 while the House of Representatives, led by Mr. Barton of Texas, has yet to act in compassion for the families who have lost loved ones. I am asking you today to pass the auto safety provisions in H.R. 3 in dedication to Amy's life, human life and public safety.

Syndi Ecker  
Atascadero, CA