



SUVs and Safety:
What We Know Now

Quotes From Last Year's Debate	Facts on SUV Safety
<p>“Anyone who rides the 495 beltway in Washington or 695 in Baltimore knows we face big trucks; we face road rage. Mothers want to be in the functional civilian equivalent of a Humvee. Why? Because they are scared. They are scared for their children and for their safety. So they go big and they go bulk.”¹</p>	<p>Bigger does not equal safer. In fact, a Chevy Blazer is far more dangerous to its passengers than is a mid-size Ford Taurus.² SUV rollovers accounted for 53 percent of the increase in traffic fatalities in 2002. Mothers should be more concerned about the risks of driving a SUV.</p>
<p>“We should not have the Federal Government saying you are going to drive the purple people eater shown here.... I also was trying to figure out how I was going to get my 6 ft 2 ½ inch frame in this automobile.... And I don't want every American to have to drive this car.”³</p>	<p>SUVs, are the real people eaters. They threaten the lives of their own passengers and the occupants of other vehicles. An expert from the University of Michigan estimates that the aggressive design of SUVs needlessly kills 2000 people each year in crashes.⁴</p>
<p>“I love the golf carts. They are going to be all over the place if we have this absolutely arbitrary 37-mile-per-gallon fleet average, or 35, or whatever they come up with secondary amendment. We are going to be driving lots of golf carts because they will make it.”⁵</p>	<p>Better fuel economy for light trucks will make them safer. Limiting weight and size reductions to the heaviest vehicles will minimize the risks to other drivers on the road.⁶ Economic factors drive automakers to concentrate weight changes in heaviest, not the lightest, vehicles.</p>

¹ Senator Mikulski, March 12, 2002, Congressional Record page S1752-S1753.

²Ross, Marc, Wenzel, Tom, “Are SUVs Really Safer than Cars? An analysis of Risk by Vehicle Type and Model,” Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory Seminar, Washington, DC, July 30, 2002.

³Senator Lott, March 13, 2002, Congressional Record page S1825.

⁴See Bradsher, Keith, High and Mighty: SUVs- The World's Most Dangerous Vehicles and How They Got That Way, 2002, at 193 (referring to Joksch, Hans C., “Vehicle Design versus Aggressivity,” (Apr.2000), DOT HS 809 194, at 40-42).

⁵ Senator Bond, March 12, 2002, Congressional Record page S1768.

⁶ National Research Council, “Effectiveness and Impact of Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) Standards, 2002, Finding 13, p. 5.