

STATEMENT

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Good Morning, I am Alan Maness, with State Farm Insurance Companies, and I would like to discuss some important auto safety issues that are currently being considered by Congress in the transportation bill.

State Farm Insurance is the nation's largest auto insurer. For decades we have led business community efforts to promote highway and auto safety. We have done this in our own right and by working with groups such as the Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety and Partners for Child Passenger Safety, a multi disciplinary research program with the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

We want to join with other safety advocates today in urging the transportation bill conferees to include a number of critical safety standards in the final version of H.R. 3.

The most critical vehicle safety issue Congress should address is the prevention of rollovers and reducing the deadly consequences of rollover crashes. From 1991 to 2003 there were more than 125,000 rollover fatalities in the United States. There are several critical steps we must take. First, as provided in the Senate passed version of H.R. 3, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) should move forward with a

rollover prevention standard. There are a number of promising technologies, including electronic stability control, which if incorporated into vehicle design across the board would prevent many rollovers from occurring. In addition, there needs to be a stronger roof crush standard. The original roof crush standard has not been updated since 1971. The roof crush standard is a particular problem in rollovers because it means that occupants are inadequately protected in these types of crashes. Finally, NHTSA should establish performance criteria to reduce complete and partial ejection of vehicle occupants. Again, such a standard would help to reduce the deadly consequences of rollovers.

State Farm, along with consumer, medical, health and safety groups, and other insurers support this legislation. It is an important step in advancing auto safety.