

THE COALITION FOR AMERICAN TRAUMA CARE

For Immediate Release
July 21, 2005

Contact: Dr. Marcia Mabee (703-709-3001)

Trauma Care Professionals Urge Congress to Include Safety Provisions in Highway Bill

The Coalition for American Trauma Care, an alliance of trauma-related organizations (www.traumacoalition.org) urges House and Senate conferees negotiating final provisions in H.R.3, the surface transportation reauthorization bill, to keep Senate passed safety provisions in the final version of the bill. Postponing action on these safety provisions, as Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Joe Barton has proposed, will effectively end these efforts to save lives and prevent debilitating injuries.

Injury is the leading cause of death for Americans aged 1 to 34 and the fifth leading cause of death overall. It is also the leading cause of disability. Among injury deaths, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause for all ages under 65.

Every year more than 40,000 Americans die on the nation's highways. Research has shown that many of these deaths can be prevented through improved motor vehicle design such as rollover stability control, crush resistant roofs, upgraded door locks to prevent occupant ejection, and improved side impact crash protection. Further research to evaluate backover prevention technology could prevent the tragedy of parents backing over their young children.

Trauma care professionals see the consequences of motor vehicle injury every day. "If lawmakers could spend 24 hours in a trauma center and see the motor vehicle injuries trauma teams deal with every day, I don't think they would hesitate to enact the Senate bill's safety provisions as soon as possible," stated Howard Champion, MD, President of the Coalition for American Trauma Care. "They would do everything possible to prevent these injuries and deaths -- now."

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