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July 14, 2025

The Honorable Sean Duffy
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Duffy,

I write to call on the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to immediately issue its long overdue rule to protect children from vehicular heatstroke. Every year, children tragically die when the temperatures inside the cars they are in become deadly high, which can occur in mere minutes during the summer. Already this year, fifteen children have died across ten states from these fully preventable deaths.¹

I was proud to champion the Helping Overcome Trauma for Children Alone in the Rear Seat (HOT CARS) Act, which was incorporated into the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021. This law directed NHTSA to issue a rule requiring new cars be equipped with a system to alert the driver to check rear seats after the engine is turned off by November 2023. As of last fall, NHTSA expected to publish a proposed rule in April 2025.² However, today, more than two months after that deadline and one and a half years after the initial deadline for a final rule, NHTSA has not even issued a proposed rule.

I urge you to direct NHTSA to act with haste and issue proposed and final rules to protect children from vehicular heatstroke deaths without further delay. As record-high summer weather continues across the country, we must do everything we can to end these preventable tragedies.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate

¹ "2025 Child Hot Car Deaths," *Kids and Care Safety*, <https://www.kidsandcars.org/2025-child-hot-car-deaths> (last accessed July 10, 2025).

² Office of Management and Budget, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Fall 2024 Unified Agenda, 2127-AM49, Rear Designated Seating Position.