



October 18, 2011

U.S. Senate / House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator / Representative,

The week of October 16 to 22 has been designated by Congress as National Teen Driver Safety Week (NTDSW) in order to draw attention to this critical public health and safety issue. For our families, however, a special week is not needed to highlight the importance of this issue. Each of us has lost a son or daughter in a crash involving a teen driver. For this reason, we are working tirelessly to prevent other parents from enduring this devastating but needless loss.

Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of teens in the United States, claiming more lives each year than homicide, suicide, and cancer combined. In 2009 alone, more than 5,600 people were killed in crashes involving teen drivers. More than 3,300 of these fatalities were the teen drivers themselves and their teen passengers. Even more importantly, each of these fatalities was a son, a daughter, a sibling, or a friend and leaves behind a family who mourns and misses their presence in our lives every day.

Bi-partisan legislation, the Safe Teen And Novice Driver Uniform Protection (STANDUP) Act, H.R. 1515, has been introduced that addresses this problem. The bill establishes strong, comprehensive minimum requirements for state Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws.

These minimum requirements are based on recommendations by the National Transportation Safety Board, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics as well as extensive research on successful state teen driving laws. We believe that every teenager in every state deserves to be protected by an effective and lifesaving GDL law. The STANDUP Act will encourage the adoption of state teen driving laws which will prevent crashes, save lives and reduce injuries.

As parents of children killed in crashes involving teen drivers, we wholeheartedly endorse the provisions in the STANDUP Act, and we are not alone in our support. These provisions are supported by the Saferoads4teens Coalition, an organization of more than 150 national, state and local groups representing doctors, nurses, first responders, law enforcement, consumer advocates, safety professionals, and business leaders. Additionally, opinion surveys have shown strong support among parents, teens and the general public.

It is time for Congress to act to protect our children especially when a successful solution is at hand. We don't want other families to experience our tragic loss of a child in a preventable crash involving a teen driver. We urge you to recognize National Teen Driver Safety Week and to honor our children by co-sponsoring the STANDUP Act and helping to pass this legislation now. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jerry Assa
Plainview, New York
Father of Brian Assa
Killed in a crash 1-19-08

Dawn M. Berry
Medina, Ohio
Mother of Travis Morgan Latka
Killed in a crash 3-24-07

Alan Brown
Cartersville, Georgia
Father of Joshua Brown
Died following a crash 7-9-03

Marlene Case
Lower Pottsgrove, Pennsylvania
Mother of Andrew Case
Killed in a crash 11-23-09

Dee Cavalli-Tutka
Shelton, Connecticut
Mother of Viviana Rose Cavalli
Killed in a crash 11-20-09

Sherry Chapman
Coventry, Connecticut
Mother of Ryan Ramirez
Killed in a crash 12-7-02

Captain Tom Didone
Montgomery County, Maryland
Father of Ryan Didone
Killed in a crash 10-20-08

Julie and Lowell Garner
Fredericksburg, Virginia
Parents of Hunter Garner
Killed in a crash 6-10-07

Tim Hollister
West Hartford, Connecticut
Father of Reid Hollister
Killed in a crash 12-2-06

Donna L. Jenner
Wolcott, Connecticut
Mother of Anthony and Jessica Apruzzese
Killed in a crash 10-4-07

Pamela Lewis-Taylor
Fort Mill, South Carolina
Mother of Kelli Laine Lewis
Killed in a crash 1-21-01

Bob and Eilene Okerblom
Santa Maria, California
Parents of Eric Okerblom
Killed while on his bike, 7-25-09

Janice and Jim Palmer
Glastonbury, Connecticut
Parents of Daniel Palmer
Killed in a crash 12-6-02

Jim Portell
Davenport, Florida
Father of Jamie Portell
Killed in a crash 10-4-02

Bonnie Raffaele
Sault Ste Marie, Michigan
Mother of Kelsey Raffaele
Killed in a crash 1-24-10

Elizabeth Raffo
Pawcatuck, Connecticut
Mother of Michael J. Raffo, Jr.
Killed in a crash 4-9-07

James and Pamela Reeve
Middletown, Connecticut
Parents of Brandon Reeve
Killed in a crash 10-7-04

Rob and Shari Reynolds
Omaha, Nebraska
Parents of Cady Ann Reynolds
Died following a crash 5-31-07

Amy and Dave Roy
Farmington, Connecticut
Parents of Alyssa Suzanne Roy
Killed in a crash 8-23-07

Ray Sanderbeck
Medina, Ohio
Father of Michelle Sanderbeck
Killed in a crash 3-4-06

Linda E. Strickland
Colchester, Connecticut
Mother of Alexander C. Bousquet,
Killed in a crash 7-19-06

Susan Vavala
Newark, Delaware
Mother of Kim Vavala
Killed in a crash 6-12-95

Deborah Wrann
Enfield, Connecticut
Mother of Austin Wrann
Killed in a crash 6-18-06

