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TESTIMONY ON HB#/0777 - POSITION:
FAVORABLE

Motor Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)

TO: Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB#/0777, Motor Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)

The United States Department of Transportation National Highway Safety Traffic Administration reports that *You Can Help Prevent Hot Car Deaths - Tips for Keeping Children Safe*¹

1000+ child hot car deaths have occurred since 1998. About 37 children a year die from [heatstroke](#), either because they were left or became trapped in a car. During the summer, that's about two children every week killed in a hot car.

The majority of hot car deaths — 52% — happen because someone forgets a child in a car. You may be asking yourself: How does this happen? Families who lost loved ones thought the same thing at one point, but then the tragedy happened to them. Hot car deaths don't just occur in the summer heat. On average, the first vehicular heatstroke of the year happens in March, according to [Jan Null](#), who has been tracking such deaths since 1998. Among the trends he discovered over the years:

- About 47% of the time when a child is forgotten, the caregiver meant to drop the child off at daycare or preschool.
- Thursdays and Fridays — the end of the workweek — have had the highest deaths.
- More than half of the deaths (55%) are children under 2 years old.

Maryland can take positive action to prevent these tragedies by ensuring vehicles sold in Maryland include technology warning that the car has rear occupants.

This bill meets that goal by prohibiting a person from selling or offering for sale certain motor vehicles manufactured or assembled after a certain date unless the motor vehicle is equipped with a rear occupant alert system; prohibiting the Motor Vehicle Administration from registering a motor vehicle sold in violation of the Act; etc.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0777.

¹ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/child-safety/you-can-help-prevent-hot-car-deaths>