



February 4, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 777 – Motor Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)
Position: Unfavorable

Dear Chair Korman:

On behalf of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation¹ (Auto Innovators), I wanted to express our opposition to HB 77, legislation now unnecessary in light of automaker commitments and anticipated federal activity.

There is perhaps no more gut-wrenching realization for a parent or caregiver than discovering a child suffering from heatstroke after being left unattended in a vehicle's back seat. Recognizing that most of these deaths are caused by children being unintentionally left by a caregiver that forgot the child was in the vehicle, automakers have taken voluntary action to help avert these tragic losses by adding rear-seat reminder systems to prompt parents and caregivers to check the back seat before exiting.

In 2019, leading automakers made a proactive, voluntary commitment to install rear seat reminder systems in new vehicles. Participating manufacturers committed to installing these rear seat reminder systems as standard equipment beginning on either September 1, 2024 or for model year 2025 vehicles. This voluntary commitment is enforceable by the Federal Trade Commission. The accord will require the use of a combination of audible and visual alerts whenever there is the potential presence of rear seat occupants and it allows automakers to take action now, instead of waiting years for a federal regulation or standard to be adopted. Based on our latest [industry report](#) (October 2024), there were more than 260 make/model vehicles with rear seat reminder systems as standard equipment.

The voluntary agreement establishes a baseline, not a ceiling. Key to this commitment is the flexibility it provides to develop innovative systems that meet the terms of the agreement as technology evolves.

Education is also a critical link to raise general public awareness regarding the dangers of leaving a child alone in a vehicle. To that end, the National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA) has committed to significantly increasing their expenditure toward a public engagement campaign

¹ From the manufacturers producing most vehicles sold in the U.S. to autonomous vehicle innovators to equipment suppliers, battery producers and semiconductor makers – Alliance for Automotive Innovation represents the full auto industry, a sector supporting 10 million American jobs and five percent of the economy. Active in Washington, D.C. and all 50 states, the association is committed to a cleaner, safer and smarter personal transportation future.
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around preventing pediatric heatstroke deaths in motor vehicles. This NHTSA effort builds upon a multi-year effort by automakers to bring attention to the issue.

In addition to the voluntary commitments made by automakers, NHTSA is already in active rulemaking and is in the process of developing an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM). According to the [Unified Agenda](#), is schedule to be published sometime in the near future. They are also in the process of conducting research to evaluate technology to address instances of heatstroke ([see HERE beginning slide 5](#)).

While automakers respect the sponsor's intentions in filing this legislation, the adoption of a state-level manufacturing standard relative to a rear seat reminder system is unwarranted at this time.

For all the above reasons, Auto Innovators requests an unfavorable report on HB 777. If I can answer any questions or provide any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-326-5562 or jfisher@autosinnovate.org.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Josh Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Josh Fisher
Senior Director, State Affairs
Alliance for Automotive Innovation