



February 16, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chairman, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Sent via email

Re: Support for HB 777, *Motor Vehicles – Required Equipment – Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)*

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the National Safety Council (NSC), I respectfully submit the following letter in strong support of HB 777, the Hot Cars Act.

NSC is America’s leading nonprofit safety advocate and has been for over 110 years. As a mission-based organization, we work to eliminate the leading causes of preventable death and injury, focusing our efforts on the workplace and roadway. We create a culture of safety to keep people safer in the workplace and beyond so they can live their fullest lives. Our 13,000+ member companies represent employees at nearly 41,000 U.S. worksites, including 358 in Maryland.

HB 777 would require that newly manufactured or assembled motor vehicles be equipped with rear occupant alert systems and it would prohibit the sale or registration of non-compliant vehicles in Maryland. The bill sensibly relies on National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) standards and includes provisions to protect federal funding eligibility.

Although pediatric vehicular heatstroke is commonly associated with hotter climates, Maryland has experienced repeated tragedies. According to the long-running *NoHeatStroke.org* dataset, at least 16 Maryland children have died in hot cars since 1998, evidence that this risk is not hypothetical for the state.¹ In 2025 alone, Maryland suffered two separate child hot-car deaths in Montgomery and Harford Counties in May and July, respectively, prompting public safety warnings from local officials.^{2 3}

The national data underscores the urgency. Nationally, 39 children died in 2024, a 35% increase over 2023, and the United States has averaged about 37-38 child hot-car deaths per year for

¹ <https://www.noheatstroke.org/deaths-by-state>

² <https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/baby-hot-car-harford-county-maryland-warning/>

³ <https://wjla.com/news/local/toddler-dies-hot-car-montgomery-county-police-department-arcola-elementary-silver-spring-maryland-car-safety-kids-children-shiera-goff>



decades, with record highs of 53 in both 2018 and 2019.⁴ More than 1,010 U.S. children have died in hot cars over the past 25 years, and in over half of these cases, the child was unintentionally forgotten—the exact failure mode rear-seat alert technology addresses.⁵

Rear occupant alert systems (ROAS) provide driver reminders to check the rear seat after ignition shut off; many OEMs now incorporate advanced motion and presence-detection sensors beyond simple rear seat reminders.⁶ HB 777 aligns Maryland with federal standards for this equipment, ensuring uniformity and performance.

Maryland's record—16 child deaths since 1998, including two in 2025—shows these tragedies are not a stranger to the state and are entirely preventable. HB 777 is a prudent, standards-based solution that will save lives without imposing undue burden, ensures enforceability, has a proportionate scope attached to federal timelines and places Maryland among states leading on child safety technology.

For these reasons, the National Safety Council respectfully urges passage of HB 777.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to protecting Maryland families. NSC stands ready to assist the Committee with technical support, education materials and implementation of best practices. If you have any questions, or if NSC can be of further assistance on this issue, please contact State Government Affairs Manager Juan Carlos Payero at juancarlos.payero@nsc.org or (202) 679-5734.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lorraine Martin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Lorraine Martin
CEO

Cc: Delegate Ryan Spiegel
Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

⁴ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/campaign/heatstroke>

⁵ <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/motor-vehicle-safety-issues/hotcars/>

⁶ <https://www.consumerreports.org/car-safety/guide-to-rear-seat-reminder-systems/>