

HB777 - Sponsor Amendments (Delegate Ryan Spiegel)

Uploaded by: Delegate Ryan Spiegel

Position: FAV



HB0777/853121/1

AMENDMENTS
PREPARED
BY THE
DEPT. OF LEGISLATIVE
SERVICES

16 FEB 26
18:46:30

BY: Delegate Spiegel

(To be offered in the Environment and Transportation Committee)

AMENDMENT TO HOUSE BILL 777

(First Reading File Bill)

On page 2, strike in their entirety lines 1 through 4, inclusive, and substitute:

“(1) MANUFACTURED OR ASSEMBLED ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2029; AND”;

in line 8, after “VEHICLE” insert **“WITH A MANUFACTURER’S GROSS VEHICLE WEIGHT RATING OF 10,000 POUNDS OR LESS”**; and strike beginning with “THAT” in line 12 down through “ADMINISTRATION” in line 14.

HB777 (Hot Cars Act - 2026) - Del. Ryan Spiegel Te

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Position: FAV

RYAN SPIEGEL
Legislative District 17
Montgomery County

Appropriations Committee

Subcommittees

Oversight Committee on Pensions

Transportation and the Environment



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 223
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
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Ryan.Spiegel@house.maryland.gov

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Motor Vehicles - Required Equipment
Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act) (HB 777) - 2026
Testimony of Delegate Ryan Spiegel – Favorable**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Members of the Committee:

House Bill 777 requires passenger vehicles manufactured after October 1, 2029 to have a rear occupant alert system.

I introduced this bill in the wake of a tragic incident in my district where an infant was inadvertently left in the rear seat of a vehicle and died of overheating. This was not neglect. It was not intentional. It was a momentary failure of human memory with irreversible consequences—and it can happen to anyone.

Extensive scientific testing has shown the shocking speed with which vehicle cabin temperatures can rise *dozens* of degrees in mere minutes, even when the outdoor temperature is mild. (See attached photos of temperature tests.) The danger to infants and pets is grave.

Nationwide, an average of roughly 35 to 40 children die each year after being left in hot cars. Since tracking began in the late 1990s, more than 1,000 children in the United States have died in these entirely preventable incidents (See https://www.kidsandcars.org/document_center/download/hot-cars/Heatstroke-fact-sheet.pdf). Most of these cases involve loving, attentive parents who believed they had already dropped their child off at daycare.

Researchers have shown this happens because of a cognitive phenomenon called prospective memory failure – when routine autopilot overrides intention. When a parent deviates from a normal routine, the brain substitutes habit for awareness. In other words, the brain sincerely believes the task was completed when it was not.

This is precisely the kind of human error that technology is designed to prevent.

For years, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration studied regulatory options for rear occupant reminders, and federal rulemaking was anticipated but has stalled for years. In the absence of federal action, states have begun considering narrowly tailored, low-burden safety standards.

Most major motor vehicle manufacturers already voluntarily include an end-of-trip reminder in many or all of their new models, including manufacturers such as General Motors, Hyundai, Kia, Nissan, Toyota, Honda, Subaru, and others. I commend their investment in these systems to improve safety, and the fact that so many manufacturers are already doing this is further argument for—not against—this bill, because it demonstrates that the technology is widely available and inexpensive.

These systems are simple. They do not require cameras or sensors. They detect that a rear door was opened before a trip and display or sound a reminder to check the back seat when the engine is turned off.

The estimated cost of this feature is under \$20 per vehicle, a negligible amount in the cost of a new car and one already absorbed by much of the industry.

HB777 does not mandate a specific version of this technology. Manufacturers may use audible alerts, dashboard messages, or any comparable reminder system. It applies only to new passenger vehicles and does not apply to used vehicles already on the road.

There is a sponsor amendment drafted for the Committee's consideration, with two provisions. One clarifies the implementation date of the mandate as October 1, 2029, providing manufacturers multiple model years of runway to comply, to reduce obstacles to compliance and in recognition of the multiyear development process for new model vehicles. Additionally, in response to concerns raised by the Maryland Motor Truck Association, a second provision clarifies that the requirements apply only to vehicles weighing 10,000 pounds gross vehicle weight rating or less. Under both Maryland and federal law, commercial motor vehicles are defined as those over 10,000 pounds GVWR, meaning heavy commercial trucks are not subject to this requirement.

This bill is intentionally modest. It is not a perfect solution and will not prevent every tragedy, but it will prevent some at minimal cost using technology that already exists and is already widely deployed. It is a good first step.

Compounding the tragedies, these cases often lead to criminal prosecution even though they stem from normal brain function failure rather than recklessness, and there are documented racial and gender disparities in those prosecutions. (See <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/lapo.70002>.) Prevention is the only humane policy response, which is why states such as California and New York are also considering similar legislation. Once the mistake happens, no legal outcome repairs the harm to the child or the family.

Car manufacturers argue that only the federal government should be making vehicle safety regulations. But the reality is that existing state laws in Maryland already require a variety of safety features in vehicles, including seatbelts (MD Code, Transportation § 22-412), headlights (MD Code, Transportation, § 22-203), and brakes (MD Code, Transportation, § 22-301), to name a few. And of course, California has passed several

state laws governing vehicle manufacturers. While California has a much larger vehicle market, and while manufacturers unsurprisingly find unified nationwide standards preferable, state requirements are hardly unprecedented. And in a situation like this, where the burden is minimal and the upside could save the lives of infants and pets, and where federal regulators are dragging their feet, this is clearly an appropriate, limited space for application of state law.

We regularly require seatbelts, airbags, cameras, and tire pressure monitoring systems because predictable human error exists. A reminder to check the back seat belongs in that same category.

HB777 is a simple, practical, and compassionate step to save children's lives.

I respectfully request a favorable report.



HB0777/853121/1

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Temperature Display Vehicles – Maryland State Firefighters Association

(Photo Documentation - 2025)

Courtesy of the MSFA



OUTDOOR TEMPERATURE

67.5°F

VEHICLE TEMPERATURE

92.6°F

SAFE
KIDS
MARYLAND

Never Leave a Child Alone in a Car

It only takes a few short minutes before a child can become dangerously overheated in a car.

Everyone can make a difference by remembering to ACT.

-  **A** Avoid Heatstroke
-  **C** Create Reminders
-  **T** Take Action

www.safekids.org









HB777 FAV Avila Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus

Uploaded by: Jason Avila

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE LATINO CAUCUS

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TO: Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Delegate Michele Guyton, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee Members
FROM: Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus
DATE: 2/19/26
RE: HB0777 - Maryland Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)

The MLLC supports HB0777 - Maryland Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)

The MLLC is a bipartisan group of Senators and Delegates committed to supporting legislation that improves the lives of Latinos throughout our state. The MLLC is a crucial voice in the development of public policy that uplifts the Latino community and benefits the state of Maryland. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to express our support of HB0777.

Over the past 25 years, more than 1,010 children have died of heatstroke by being left in a hot car.¹ As of 2021, there were about 220,000 Latino children in Maryland, half of whom were under the age of 12.² This large population of Latino children may be particularly subject to the threat of being left in a hot car as research shows that Latino and Hispanic families disproportionately face stressful working conditions.³ Stressful working conditions and taking on multiple jobs often may lead to a lapse of focus and as a result, an increased likelihood of a child being left in the car. Moreover, as the total Maryland Latino population grows,⁴ the risk of tragedy due to being left in a hot car also grows.

By requiring all vehicles sold after October 1, 2029, this bill would help ensure that Latino children and families would not be subject to avoidable tragedy. In addition, the fiscal impact of the bill would be minimal as many cars already have rear occupant alert systems and for those that don't, estimates show that the systems only cost about \$20 per vehicle.⁵ All in all, this bill would benefit all Maryland families by ensuring that the avoidable instance of leaving a child in the car does not lead to tragedy.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Latino Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0777.

¹ [Child Heatstroke Prevention: Prevent Hot Car Deaths | NHTSA](#)

² [HC-datapoint-table-9.15-v2-002-e1694802486352.png \(2247x3904\)](#)

³ [The Job Characteristics of Low-Income Hispanic Parents - Hispanic Research Center](#)

⁴ [Census Updates 2024: Latino Population Growth and What It Means for Maryland - Cool & Associates LLC](#)

⁵ [COST, WEIGHT, AND ANALYSIS OF PEDIATRIC VEHICULAR HEAT STROKE](#)

HB777 FAV Wilkins Legislative Black Caucus

Uploaded by: Jheanelle Wilkins

Position: FAV



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS OF MARYLAND, INC.

The Maryland House of Delegates, 6 Bladen Street, Room 300, Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3185 • 301-858-3185 • 800-492-7122 Ext. 3185 • Fax 410-841-3175 • 301-858-3175 • Black.Caucus@house.state.md.us

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

The Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland offers its strong and favorable support for House Bill 777 (HB777) –Motor Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act). HB 777 requires certain new motor vehicles to be equipped with a rear occupant alert system.

This legislation prohibits anyone from selling or offering for sale cars manufactured or assembled after a specified date unless the vehicle includes this system. The Motor Vehicle Administration is also prohibited from registering vehicles sold in violation of this requirement. This measure will take effect on October 1, 2029, giving manufacturers sufficient time to comply.

HB 777 protects passengers, especially children, by alerting drivers if someone remains in the back seat. This evidence-based safety feature can prevent serious injuries or fatalities, including accidents and heatstroke, and ensures that newer vehicles include modern safety standards.

This bill is particularly relevant to Black Marylanders and all communities, as children are at the center of every community. By requiring rear occupant alert systems, HB 777 encourages responsible vehicle use, improves overall vehicle safety, and ensures that all new cars meet standards that protect passengers' lives.

For these reasons, the Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland strongly supports HB777.

Legislative Black Caucus of Maryland

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SafeRoadsMD Supports HB 777.pdf

Uploaded by: John Seng

Position: FAV



SafeRoadsMD

PLEASE SUPPORT HB 777
“Hot Cars Act of 2026”

MARYLAND COALITION FOR ROADWAY SAFETY, INC.

URGES MD HOUSE ENT COMMITTEE SUPPORT FOR HB 777

February 17, 2026

TO:

Honorable Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Honorable Delegate Michele Guyton, Vice Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
250 & 251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FROM:

John Seng, Chair
SafeRoadsMD - Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.
(202) 468-7682, JSeng@SafeRoadsMD.org
SafeRoadsMD.org



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Subj: Support of HB 777 — Motor Vehicles – Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act of 2026)
Environment & Transportation Committee

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton and Members of the Maryland House Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of House Bill 777 — the Hot Cars Act of 2026.

SafeRoadsMD is a Maryland-wide nonprofit dedicated to advancing traffic safety and preventing needless tragedies on our roads. I write today because HB 777 represents a commonsense, lifesaving policy that will protect Maryland families — especially our most vulnerable: children, pets, and other rear-seat occupants.

Each year in the United States, dozens of children suffer and die due to pediatric vehicular heatstroke when left unattended in parked cars. In Maryland alone last year, we suffered multiple heartbreaking deaths in 2025 from hot car incidents. For example, a 2-year-old girl in Montgomery County tragically died after being left in a vehicle for several hours earlier this spring, before the summer heat arrived, underscoring how quickly and unexpectedly these events can unfold. ([WJLA](#))

Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.
2127 Regina Terrace, Clarksburg, MD 20871 (202) 468-7682

This was followed by the death of a 6-month-old baby girl in Harford County this past summer — the second such hot car death in Maryland — when interior temperatures soared and life-threatening heat built up inside a closed vehicle. ([CBS News](#))

These tragedies are not rare and they are not simply “unfortunate accidents.” Disaster results from human fallibility — an all-too-common lapse in routine, distraction, or stress that causes a caregiver to forget a child in the back seat. Research shows that memory systems can override our awareness during routine tasks, especially when a normal pattern changes even slightly, and this can lead to catastrophic outcomes. ([WMAR 2 News Baltimore](#))

HB 777 helps address that vulnerability by requiring new passenger vehicles sold in Maryland to include federally-standardized Rear Occupant Alert Systems (ROAS). These systems remind drivers to check the rear seats after turning off the vehicle — a simple prompt that can interrupt a memory lapse at a critical moment and prevent an otherwise preventable tragedy.

This technology is already being adopted by many automakers voluntarily. But mandating this technology for vehicles sold in Maryland ensures that all Maryland families benefit from this lifesaving innovation.

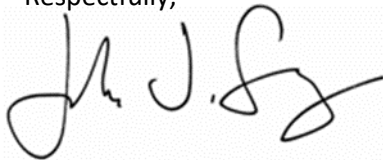
Importantly, the bill appropriately aligns with federal standards and allows time for manufacturers to comply following final NHTSA regulations. It balances safety with practical implementation for the auto industry while empowering the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to verify compliance at the time of sale or registration.

Some have noted concerns about costs associated with vehicle equipment mandates. Rear occupant alert systems, however, are already being deployed in many vehicles today, and the technology’s benefits far outweigh any incremental cost — especially considering the *precious human lives* at stake.

The bottom line: HB 777 is a proactive, preventative, and humane measure. It does not wait until another Maryland family suffers the unimaginable loss of a child due to heatstroke in a parked vehicle. Instead, it leverages a proven tool to reduce the likelihood of that loss. For these reasons, SafeRoadsMD urges your favorable report on HB 777.

Thank you for your service and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Seng". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent.

John J. Seng
Chair
Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety, Inc.

cc: SafeRoadsMD Board

MD HB777 Hot Car Act FINAL.pdf

Uploaded by: Juan Carlos Payero

Position: FAV



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/>

Testimony in support of HB0777 - Hot Cars Act.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

02/19/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

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>

HB 777 Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Phillips

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

*Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel
-a 501(c)3 Organization*



Legislative Committee

17 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Chair: Robert Phillips
Email: rfcchief48@gmail.com
Cell: 443-205-5030
Office: 410-974-2222

February 19, 2025

Delegate Marc Korman
Chairman, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Delegate Michele Guyton
Vice Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
251 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Reference: HB 777

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and members of the committee:

I am writing to express strong support for Maryland House Bill 777, Motor Vehicles – Required Equipment – Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act).

HB 777 represents a practical lifesaving measure to prevent heatstroke deaths and injuries resulting from children being unintentionally left in vehicles. These tragedies are entirely preventable and continue to occur nationwide, often affecting attentive and caring families. Requiring rear occupant alert systems in newly manufactured or assembled vehicles establishes an important layer of engineered protection that supports human factors and reduces reliance on memory alone.

From a community risk reduction and public safety perspective, this legislation aligns with evidence-based prevention principles by:

- **Addressing a known, recurring risk** through built-in vehicle safety technology
- **Creating a consistent statewide standard** for life safety equipment
- **Reducing preventable child fatalities and serious injuries**
- **Supporting first responders and public safety agencies** in their mission to protect vulnerable populations

Rear occupant alert systems are a low-cost, high-impact intervention that complements ongoing public education campaigns such as “Look Before You Lock.” By integrating this safeguard directly into vehicle design, Maryland will take a proactive step toward eliminating hot car tragedies rather than relying solely on behavioral change.

Data indicates Maryland has experienced 16 preventable fatalities due to children being left unattended in hot vehicles, reinforcing the need for targeted community risk reduction and public education efforts. Passage of HB 777 will position Maryland as a national leader in child passenger safety and community risk reduction. This legislation reflects a thoughtful, preventive approach that prioritizes the protection of children and supports the broader public safety mission.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued commitment to the safety of Maryland’s families.

The Maryland State Firefighters Association respectfully urges a favorable report on HB 777. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Phillips

MSFA Legislative Committee Chair

HB777 FAV Bao AAPI Caucus

Uploaded by: Yutong Bao

Position: FAV



MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE ASIAN AMERICAN
AND PACIFIC ISLANDER CAUCUS
MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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DELEGATE SARAH WOLEK
PARLIAMENTARIAN

TO: Delegate Marc Korman, Chair
Delegate Michele Guyton, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee Members

FROM: Maryland Legislative Asian American and Pacific-Islander Caucus

DATE: 3/10/2026

RE: HB0777 - Motor Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)

The AAPI Caucus supports HB0777 - Motor Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)

The Maryland Legislative Asian American and Pacific Islander Caucus represents AAPI communities in the General Assembly and works to advance their legislative priorities. The Caucus respectfully supports HB0777, the Hot Cars Act, to improve vehicle safety and help prevent the tragic injury or death of children left in cars.

HB0777 prohibits the sale of certain motor vehicles manufactured or assembled after a specified date unless the vehicle is equipped with a rear occupant alert system. The bill also prohibits the Motor Vehicle Administration from registering a motor vehicle sold in violation of the Act. By setting a clear safety standard, the bill promotes wider use of technology designed to remind drivers to check the back seat before leaving a vehicle.

For Asian American and Pacific Islander families, this protection matters. Heat-related deaths and injuries in vehicles are preventable tragedies that can affect any family and have devastating consequences for parents, caregivers, and communities. Requiring rear occupant alert systems is a practical way to reduce the risk of human error and add an additional layer of protection for children and other vulnerable passengers.

HB0777 is a commonsense step toward safer vehicles and stronger protections for Maryland families. By requiring rear occupant alert systems in certain vehicles, the bill will help prevent avoidable harm and support public awareness of an important child safety issue.

For these reasons, the Maryland Legislative Asian-American and Pacific-Islander Caucus respectfully requests a favorable report on HB0777.

Ext. Comm. - Testimony - 2026 - Maryland HB 777 -

Uploaded by: Joshua Fisher

Position: UNF



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.
www.autosinnovate.org

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

HB777 - Letter of Information - Maryland Motor Tru

Uploaded by: Louis Campion

Position: INFO



HEARING DATE: February 19, 2026

BILL NO/TITLE: HB777: Motor Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)

COMMITTEE: House Environment & Transportation

LETTER OF INFORMATION

As originally drafted, HB777 would prohibit the sale of certain new motor vehicles unless they are equipped with a rear occupant alert system. Included in the legislation are Class E trucks, which include pickup trucks, but also include dump trucks, tow trucks, and box trucks that are designed to carry freight, not passengers. To clarify the intent of this legislation the sponsor is offering an amendment that the requirements in the bill only apply to vehicles weighing 10,000 lbs. or less. The definition of a commercial motor vehicle in Maryland and Federal law is one that it is over 10,000 lbs. gross vehicle weight rating.

MMTA appreciates this clarifying amendment to avoid confusion on the applicability of the legislation. This satisfies the concerns raised by our organization.

About Maryland Motor Truck Association: Maryland Motor Truck Association is a non-profit trade association that has represented the trucking industry since 1935. In service to its 1,000 members, MMTA is committed to support, advocate and educate for a safe, efficient and profitable trucking industry in Maryland.

For further information, contact: Louis Campion, (c) 443-623-5663

HB0777 - LOI - MVA - Motor Vehicles - Required Equ

Uploaded by: Patricia Westervelt

Position: INFO

February 19, 2026

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

RE: Letter of Information – House Bill 777 – Motor Vehicles - Required Equipment - Rear Occupant Alert Systems (Hot Cars Act)

Dear Chair Korman and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Transportation takes no position on House Bill 777 but offers the following information for the Committee’s consideration.

HB 777 would prohibit the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) from registering a motor vehicle of a certain model year or newer that does not have a rear occupant alert system that notifies a driver an occupant is in the rear seat after the vehicle is turned off. The requirement is contingent on a final rule being passed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) establishing standards for such a system. The MVA must further develop verification that a vehicle has such a system installed or refuse to register it.

Federal standards set by law and/or NHTSA establish the requirements for manufacturers of motor vehicles and are responsible for modern innovations such as the three-point seat belt, air bags, rearview video systems, and electronic stability control among other features. The Maryland State Police oversee, regulate, and license all vehicle safety inspection stations in Maryland, both state-owned and private. All licensed inspection stations conduct vehicle safety inspections to confirm that required safety components and essential operating parts are installed and meet National Highway Traffic Safety Administration standards based on the vehicle’s model year.

Among technology that is to be required of manufacturers by NHTSA is a rear occupant alert system that alerts a driver of a rear seat occupant when a vehicle is turned off. This new safety feature was required in the 2021 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law which mandated NHTSA to promulgate a rule by November 15, 2023, requiring such technology in new vehicles by manufacturers. Such safety warnings can help ensure a driver does not mistakenly leave a child or pet in a rear seat during warm weather months. A vehicle temperature can quickly escalate to over 100 degrees even on a mild temperature day, turning fatal as a result. Per the National Safety Council, two Maryland children have tragically died in 2025 from heat related causes after being left in unattended vehicles in 2025, the first reported deaths from this tragic occurrence since 2015 when two children also died from heat inside unattended vehicles.

The Honorable Marc Korman
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The MVA supports all action to prevent these tragedies from occurring, however NHTSA regulations apply to all vehicle manufacturers producing in or importing vehicles to the United States. Thus HB 777 would be duplicative as no vehicles could be manufactured and sold in the United States, including Maryland, that do not meet NHTSA safety standards.

The Maryland Department of Transportation respectfully requests the committee consider this information during its deliberation of House Bill 777.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Nizer
Administrator
Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
410-787-7830

Matthew Mickler
Director of Government Affairs
Maryland Department of Transportation
410-865-1090