

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

June 11, 2024

Re: Request for 6/20 meeting with Secretary Buttigieg

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

As parents who have lost children in hot car tragedies, we are writing to request a meeting with you on June 20th to discuss a critical issue that affects the safety and well-being of our nation's children. We will be in Washington, DC next week and would like to meet with you. The four of us and nearly 100 other parents have sent letters to you that have gone unanswered for several years. The tragic incidents of children being trapped in hot cars, resulting in preventable deaths and lifelong injuries, are happening far too often, and we need your leadership to address the issue.

As mandated by the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, Pub. L. 117-58), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is required to issue a Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard that would necessitate all new passenger motor vehicles to be equipped with technology aimed at preventing hot car tragedies. However, despite the Congressionally mandated deadline of November 2023, the NHTSA has yet to issue a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), let alone the final rule.

The consequences of these delays are dire. Since 1990, over 1,085 children have lost their lives in hot car incidents, including our children, with thousands more enduring varying degrees of injuries. The tragedy of a child or companion animal dying in a hot car is entirely preventable, yet readily available and comprehensive occupant detection and alert systems are not standard in most vehicles, and effective aftermarket solutions are lacking.

The urgency of this matter cannot be overstated. Innocent lives are at stake, and every day of delay means more children and companion animals are at risk of falling victim to this entirely preventable tragedy.

Considering the urgency and severity of the situation, we request a meeting with you on the afternoon of June 20. Our firsthand experiences and insights highlight the urgent need for action and the devastating impact of inaction. This meeting would provide a powerful opportunity to learn more about the importance of expediting the hot car safety standard issuance and ensuring that every possible measure is taken to prevent further loss of life.

Secretary Buttigieg, we would appreciate you using your influence and authority to urge the NHTSA and the DOT to prioritize and expedite the hot car safety standard issuance. Children across the country depend on us to protect them, and we cannot afford to delay any longer.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter and your commitment to the safety and security of America's children.

Sincerely,

Jamie Dill (Evansville, IN)

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Parent Advocate, Kids and Car Safety, mother of Oliver, died in 2019 after he was inadvertently left in a car by his father.

Laura Beck (Midlothian, VA)

Parent Advocate, Kids and Car Safety, mother of Anderson Beck, who lost his life in a hot car, followed immediately by the loss of her husband, Aaron, who took his own life in 2022 after discovering that he did not drop his baby boy off at daycare.

Marissa Rodriguez (New City, NY)

Parent Advocate, Kids and Car Safety, mother of Luna and Phoenix, who died in a hot car after their father inadvertently left them in the car.

Taylor (MA)

Parent Advocate, Kids and Car Safety, mother of Fiona, who died in a hot car in 2022 after being unknowingly left in a hot car by her father.

Representing countless parents who have tragically lost their children under similar circumstances, we would like to meet with you in a collective voice and a shared plea for change.