

For Immediate Release
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U.S. Senate Can Make History and Save Lives by Passing the AV START Act

Counterpart bipartisan bill promoting lifesaving technologies passed U.S. House one year ago

Washington, D.C.—Various automakers, suppliers, tech companies, and advocates for safer roads are urging the U.S. Senate to take action on an historic opportunity to advance greater road safety, innovation, expand mobility, and boost American competitiveness by passing the AV START Act (S. 1885).

One year ago today, a similar bill—the SELF DRIVE Act (H.R. 3388)—passed the House of Representatives with unanimous support. Like the House bill, the AV START Act establishes a framework for the safe testing, development, and deployment of automated vehicle technology while also supporting research and investment in the United States.

The AV START Act will also help strengthen existing safety oversight by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and would protect against an unworkable patchwork of state and federal laws and regulations that could stifle innovation, job growth, and the development of safety technologies.

While there are a number of compelling reasons to pass the AV START Act, the most important factor is the potential for lives to be saved. Government data shows that human choice or error is a factor in approximately 94 percent of all crashes on U.S. roads—crashes that took the lives of an estimated 40,000 men, women, and children in 2017.

The development and eventual deployment of automated vehicle technologies also has the potential to significantly reduce the number of crashes and at the same time expand mobility options for persons with disabilities, seniors, and those who require access to more affordable transportation.

Further, the decrease in crashes will mean fewer roadway backups, decreasing both congestion and carbon emissions from automobiles.

Americans understand these potential benefits. New research shows support for autonomous vehicles to improve the independence of seniors and individuals with disabilities. [In a survey fielded by Morning Consult](#), 57 percent of respondents say they are likely or very likely to support AVs because of the potential they have to transform the lives of Americans who are elderly or disabled.

Here is just a sampling of what supporters of the AV START Act are saying:

“Outdated federal regulations and the potential for a patchwork of state laws could impede the very safety benefits that show great promise. The absence of a clear federal framework, which respects traditional state authorities, could create an environment that is hostile to such innovations and inadvertently hinder America’s leadership when it comes to autonomous technologies. Fortunately, [the Senate’s] legislation, the AV START Act, offers an opportunity to address these concerns and ensure necessary oversight and regulation of such technologies – while also providing an unprecedented increase in mobility for seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities.”

–Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers

“Unfortunately, with each passing day that the [AV START Act] is not considered, investment in emerging autonomous vehicle technology heads outside of our borders, where other countries are encouraging research and deployment. But with prompt passage of [the] bill, we will have the opportunity to lead, rather than follow others on these lifesaving innovations.”

–American Highway Users Alliance

“Due to the limitations of our current transportation systems, ANCOR believes it is important for Congress to empower technological innovation in this field. Access to reliable, safe and customizable transportation, such as that offered by automated vehicles, could profoundly improve outcomes for individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities by helping them live more independently.”

–American Network of Community Options and Resources (ANCOR)

Advancements in unmanned systems and autonomous technology are happening very quickly, and the impact of this innovation on our economy, lifestyle and society is tremendous. As the world’s largest non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of unmanned systems and robotics, we have witnessed the technological advancements of the autonomous vehicle industry firsthand.

–Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems (AUVSI)

“Inaction is a vote for the status quo: 9 in 10 accidents on U.S. roads are the result of human behavior. This cannot possibly be acceptable by anyone’s measure. Based on decades of engineering experience, BMW NA firmly believes that automated driving systems and connected car technologies will make a demonstrably positive impact on road safety.”

–BMW

“Cruise and GM share a common vision: a world with zero crashes, zero emissions, and zero congestion. We believe that self-driving technology is the most effective way to achieve that vision, and we’re very passionate about our work. Even though we know deploying self-driving cars at scale won’t be without challenges, we know it’s absolutely worth it.”

–Cruise Automation

“Without question, the potential benefits of autonomous vehicles, ranging from increased safety to greater mobility access, will transform transportation in the United States. That opportunity, however, will be missed if the Senate does not pass the AV START Act and reconcile it with its House counterpart, H.R. 3388, the SELF DRIVE Act.”

–Ford Motor Company

“Autonomous vehicles are the future of transportation and will fundamentally transform how the world moves. Collaboration between the government and private sector is integral to create safety-first technologies. While companies like HARMAN have dedicated significant resources and expertise to research and development in this area, the bipartisan efforts of Congress would be true catalysts in moving this industry forward.”

–HARMAN

“Beyond the safety benefits, highly automated vehicles (HAVs) will have other important effects. For example, HAVs will provide dignified independence for the millions of Americans who are blind or have other disabilities preventing them from driving conventional vehicles. Many in this population cannot fully participate in the workforce due to lack of reliable transportation; HAV adoption can lead to greater employment opportunities. Environmental and congestion-mitigation benefits must also be considered.”

–Mercedes-Benz Research & Development North America, Inc.

“The [AV START Act] will strengthen existing oversight by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Suppliers, vehicle manufacturers, software companies, and other automated vehicle stakeholders will be required to submit to NHTSA the following: safety assessment certifications on test results; cybersecurity plans to identify potential vulnerabilities and responses; and, privacy plans to detail how vehicle information is collected, stored, used, and disclosed to consumers.”

–Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association

“[The AV START Act] presents an incredible opportunity for the United States to strengthen its traditional position of leadership in both highway safety and personal mobility. With

each passing day that the bill is not considered, investment in emerging autonomous vehicle technology risks heading outside of our borders, where other countries are encouraging research and deployment.”

–RStreet

This bill addresses roadway safety with innovative technologies while strengthening the necessary regulatory safeguards and oversight for the benefit of the public. It will set a clear federal framework for the safe testing, development and deployment of autonomous vehicle technologies, and protect against a patchwork of inconsistent state and local regulations that could stifle innovation that will save lives.

–Telecommunications Industry Association

“At Toyota, we see the potential for autonomous driving technology to help people – particularly those who cannot currently drive because of a disability or advanced age - enjoy new levels of independence and mobility. Our work on autonomous driving technology is part of our continued effort to improve lives by giving everyone in our society the freedom to move. By creating autonomy for cars, Toyota’s ultimate goal is to expand autonomy for people.”

–Toyota Research Institute

“Manufacturers and technology developers like Volkswagen Group are poised to continue to invest heavily in the United States but need to see more clearly defined roles around the regulation of automated vehicles. Without clear guardrails, uniformity and clarity around the rules of the road for automated vehicle testing and deployment in the United States these investments are likely to go elsewhere.”

–Volkswagen Group of America

“Volvo Cars supports [the Senate’s] efforts to ensure passage of this important legislation this year. Globally, Volvo Cars is at a pivotal point in the development of autonomous technology, and therefore, we need the ability to test and deploy our cars in real-life situations around the world.”

–Volvo Car USA

Additionally, on Monday, July 23, 2018, the [Coalition for Future Mobility joined a diverse group of more than 100 stakeholders](#) including advocates for the disabled, veterans, environmental groups, and safety advocates in sending a letter to the U.S. Senate to advocate for action on the bipartisan AV START Act.

Find out more about the Coalition for Future Mobility’s campaign and the benefits of self-driving vehicles at: <https://coalitionforfuturemobility.com/>

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Attachments Include Full Letters from the following:

- [Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers](#)
- [American Highway Users Alliance](#)
- [American Network of Community Options and Resources \(ANCOR\)](#)
- [Association for Unmanned Vehicle Systems \(AUVSI\)](#)
- [BMW](#)
- [Cruise Automation](#)
- [Ford Motor Company](#)
- [HARMAN](#)
- [Mercedes-Benz Research & Development North America, Inc.](#)
- [Motor and Equipment Manufacturers Association](#)
- [RStreet](#)
- [Telecommunications Industry Association](#)
- [Toyota Research Institute](#)
- [Volkswagen Group of America](#)
- [Volvo Car USA](#)