

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of**

Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade Member Kevin Mullin

Hearing on “Examining Legislative Options to Strengthen Motor Vehicle Safety, Ensure Consumer Choice and Affordability, and Cement U.S. Automotive Leadership”

January 13, 2026

Thank you Ranking Member Schakowsky and thank you Mister Chair for convening this hearing.

The bills on the agenda today touch on important aspects of automotive safety.

Nearly 40,000 people lose their lives on our roadways each year. That is a sobering statistic, and it underscores why Congress has an obligation to act and get this right.

Advances in vehicle technology – from driver assistance features to increasingly automated systems – hold enormous promise to reduce human error, avoid crashes, and save lives. At the same time, premature deployment, unclear standards, or gaps in oversight can undermine safety and public trust.

For some of my colleagues, AVs may seem like something we can worry about in the near future. But in my district in San Francisco and along the Peninsula, AVs are already here. My constituents are riding in them every day. I’ve been riding in them myself – and it’s remarkable technology. It has the potential to make life safer and more convenient for everyone, including for seniors and those with disabilities who face mobility challenges.

But it’s also uncharted territory. We’ve seen the risks and outright hazards that they can cause. Yet, I’m excited to see them develop. It just needs to happen safely.

As we consider these bills, I hope we focus on a few core principles. First, safety must remain paramount—particularly as vehicles become more complex and less intuitive for consumers to understand.

Second, transparency matters. Drivers and passengers deserve to know what a vehicle can and cannot do, and regulators need access to accurate data to assess performance and risk.

And third, there is a strong need for a framework that ensures that safety standards keep pace with innovation.

We don’t need to view innovation and safety as competing priorities. When done right, strong guardrails actually accelerate innovation by providing certainty to manufacturers, clarity to consumers, and confidence to regulators. Clear federal standards can help ensure that new

January 13, 2026

Page 2

technologies are tested rigorously, marketed honestly, and deployed responsibly across the country.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses and engaging in a robust discussion on these bills. I yield back.