

H.R. 13228 -  
National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966

MATERIAL FOR RULES COMMITTEE

This bill is known as the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966. Its basic purpose is to reduce traffic accidents and thereby reduce the deaths and injuries which result from traffic accidents. It has become abundantly apparent that the slaughter on the highways will not be materially reduced without the active and formal participation of the Federal Government. Neither in our public hearings nor in our executive sessions were their many comments to the contrary. The need for legislation in this field has been accepted as a fact by the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce.

In 1966, 50,000 persons will lose their lives as a direct result of traffic accidents and we have heard estimates that this figure will double by 1975 unless prompt remedial steps are taken at this time. We believe that this bill together with related legislation will lead to substantial improvements in traffic safety and we fervently hope to a substantial reduction in the numbers of those killed and maimed on our nation's highways.

I do not pretend that this bill takes care of every possible present or future safety consideration, but I do proudly support it as a far-reaching and well considered initiation of a new safety program.

I will outline briefly what the bill contains and how the provisions of the bill will be administered.

As I have stated, its basic or ~~central~~ purpose is to reduce accidents and thereby deaths and injuries. This would be accomplished by establishing a new program in the Department of Commerce. <sup>(1)</sup> The Secretary of Commerce would be required to issue and enforce Federal safety standards. <sup>(2)</sup> These standards would apply to the manufacture of all motor vehicles and to the manufacture of all motor vehicle equipment. <sup>(3)</sup> The Secretary would be required to undertake and support safety research and development. <sup>(4)</sup> The present National Driver Register would also be expanded under this legislation and virtually all drivers who have had their licenses revoked will have to be registered.

The Secretary will be required to issue initial standards based on <sup>public</sup> known standards on or before January 31, 1967. On or before January 31, 1968, he must issue new and revised safety standards (sec. 103). He will have the assistance of a National Motor Vehicle Safety Advisory Council. This will be made up of members of the public, members of industry, and members of state or local governments. The Secretary will consult with them before issuing, amending or revoking standards (sec. 104).

The judicial review provisions of the bill should afford protection to any interested party if he wishes to challenge orders of the Secretary. Essentially the judicial review provisions are those of the Food and Drug Act and the Administrative Procedure Act (sec. 105).

There are provisions in the bill to permit the necessary research, testing, development and training to assist the Secretary in carrying out the purpose of this legislation (sec. 106).

A number of prohibitions are contained in the act which should preclude the manufacturing or importation of vehicles and vehicle equipment which do not meet Federal Standards (sec. 108). Civil penalties (sec. 109) are provided for violations of the prohibited acts. Injunctive relief will also be available to the Secretary (sec. 110).

A National Traffic Safety Agency will be established and headed by a Presidentially-appointed administrator. This would define and identify the Federal government's interest in and responsibility for traffic safety.

Title I is applicable to the manufacture of all motor vehicle equipment and would be totally applicable therefore to tire safety standards. The committee included in Title II of the bill, however, certain specific information and other requirements with respect to these standards as they apply to tires.

Title III authorizes a study of existing research and test facilities and requires a report to Congress as to what facilities exist and what facilities are needed by December 1, 1967.

Title IV amends the existing National Driver Register law and under this amendment virtually all drivers who have had their licenses revoked or suspended will be listed.

I have briefly summarized the reasons for and the provisions of the legislation. You have the committee's report and you will find a section-by-section summary beginning on page 12 and a more detailed explanation of the bill beginning on page 14.