

Mr. Chairman, H. R. 13228 is presented to you by the Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. It was prepared after extensive hearings on the subject of motor vehicle safety by the Committee and after most careful consideration of practical ways and means by which we could achieve the ends proposed. The bill represents the best judgment of the Committee on an important subject, and I present it to you with strong recommendations that it be enacted into law.

Primarily, the bill deals with the manufacturers of motor vehicles and of motor vehicle equipment, with special emphasis on the manufacturers of tires. It imposes on all these manufacturers safety standards which have been accepted as reasonable and practical by numerous agencies and groups concerned with motor traffic, and experienced in its problems. It provides that these safety standards be revised from time to time as experience accumulates. I emphasize that the standards presently proposed have not been pulled out of the Committee's hat. They are the product of the thinking and of the experience of traffic experts.

This bill is part of a more extensive movement designed to reduce the frightening carnage on the nation's highways. When cars are safer, we can expect lower mortality figures. Practically everybody interested in motor vehicles, including the manufacturers, agrees that they can be made safer. It is the responsibility of the federal government to begin at a place which it can reach, namely, the manufacturing end. Vehicles and equipment are manufactured at fixed localities. But they are sold in interstate commerce, and the responsibility of Congress is clear.

It is to be noted that as the use of machinery in the United States increased, it has always been found necessary to set up legal requirements for safety in the design of the machinery and in its use. This has happened in such fields as factory machinery of all kinds, in the railroads, and



elsewhere. The motor vehicle is the only important piece of machinery not presently covered by safety regulations.

The bill has been criticized in some quarters as making inadequate provisions for enforcement. Such criticism must be based on the assumption of unalterable opposition to safety regulation by the automobile industry. We do not believe this to be a correct estimate of the situation. We believe that the industry will welcome safety standards which apply to all manufacturers. Automobile people are no more interested in committing murder than anybody else. They want their vehicles to be safe. Therefore we do not think elaborate and costly machinery must be set up to secure compliance. The automobile people have their competitors to keep them in the path of righteousness.

As written, the bill would be implemented through the Department of Commerce. The major provisions of the bill are: (1) The Secretary of Commerce is required to issue and enforce Federal safety standards; (2) These standards would apply to the manufacture of all motor vehicles and to the manufacture of all motor vehicle equipment, with, as I said, special emphasis on tires; (3) The Secretary would be required to undertake and support safety research and development; (4) The present National Driver Register would be expanded to include the names of virtually all drivers who have had their licenses revoked.

As you will note, provision (4) is the only practical federal means of combatting the admitted greatest safety hazard, the careless and incompetent driver.

Initial safety standards will be imposed as of January 31, 1967. These will be revised and reissued a year later. A National Motor Vehicle Safety Advisory Council, composed of members selected from State and local governments, from the manufacturing industry, and from the public, will be set up



to advise the Secretary in issuing, amending, or revoking safety standards.

Since the Committee passed the bill, an amendment has been proposed which would clarify the regulations regarding tire standards and tire grading. The Committee would not oppose this amendment, although I personally feel that the matter is covered by the bill as drawn.

I want to repeat that I consider this a very strong bill, a bill that makes a good beginning in an important field, a bill that provides for continual revision in the light of experience, a bill that is practical from the standpoint of the manufacturer, and a bill that will not add unduly to the cost to the user. I urge its acceptance by the House.

Note: Both statements you had recite in greater detail the provisions of the bill. If you wish to go into that much detail, they are set forth beginning on Page 2 of the Material for the Rules Committee. Other parts of these two statements may be useful in answering questions.