

## **Senator Luján, Senator Scott Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Eliminate Drunk Driving**

*MADD calls for passage of RIDE Act to require lifesaving technology in all new cars*

WASHINGTON ([PRWEB](#)) April 22, 2021 -- New bipartisan legislation introduced today by Senator Ben Ray Luján (D-New Mexico) and Senator Rick Scott (R-Florida) would ultimately mandate drunk driving prevention technology as standard equipment in all new vehicles. The Reduce Impaired Driving for Everyone (RIDE) Act would require the U.S. Department of Transportation to issue a rulemaking to make this lifesaving technology available in all new passenger vehicles.

The rulemaking would involve a variety of drunk driving prevention systems, including driver monitoring, which can detect signs of distracted, impaired or fatigued driving, and alcohol detection, which uses sensors to determine that a driver is under the influence of alcohol and then prevent the vehicle from moving.

“The RIDE Act holds the potential to eliminate drunk driving forever and it is one of the most important initiatives in MADD’s 40-year history,” said MADD National President Alex Otte. “Drunk driving is the leading killer on America’s roads, accounting for more than a quarter of all traffic deaths and injuring 300,000 people every year. On behalf of the nearly 1 million victims MADD has served, I thank Senator Luján and Senator Scott for leading this effort in the Senate.”

More than 9,400 drunk driving deaths could be prevented each year when drunk driving prevention technology is made standard on every new car, according to a study released last year by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

“Drunk driving has brought pain into the homes of too many New Mexicans. Across the country, thousands of families mourn the loss of loved ones in drunk driving crashes that can be prevented with the deployment of cutting-edge technologies. This can change if Congress takes action, and that’s what the RIDE Act sets out to do,” said Senator Luján. “This bipartisan legislation is a major effort to end drunk driving, keep our highways safe, and prevent needless deaths.”

“It is heartbreaking that we have lost so many to the irresponsible actions of drunk drivers, and it’s time to take real, significant action to prevent any further loss,” Senator Scott said. “I’m proud to continue leading this effort and promote the development of critical alcohol and impaired driving detection technology, which will be a huge step to protect our families and communities.”

The RIDE Act is similar to a bipartisan bill introduced March 23 in the House by U.S. Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-Michigan), David McKinley (R-West Virginia) and Kathleen Rice (D-New York). The Honoring Abbas Family Legacy to Terminate Drunk Driving (HALT) Act is named in memory of a Northville, Michigan family, Issam and Rima Abbas and their children Ali, Isabella, and Giselle, who were killed by a wrong-way drunk driver while driving home from a Florida vacation in January 2019.

“Technology that exists today would have saved my family. It’s time for the federal government and auto industry to act now to prevent other families from the unimaginable pain of losing loved ones to drunk driving,” said Rana Abbas Taylor, sister of the late Rima Abbas. “We have the ability and know-how to prevent these tragedies from happening and save thousands of lives a year.”

Congresswoman Dingell introduced legislation immediately after the Abbas family was killed.

“When a family from Michigan died senselessly because of a drunk driver, the young classmates of the children who passed asked me with tear in their eyes: ‘If technology exists to prevent this, why aren’t we doing something about this in Washington?’ I’ve never forgotten their tears or their question,” said Representative Dingell. “I’m committed to continuing to work with advocacy groups, industry, and federal regulators so we can prevent the tragedy of the Abbas family from befalling yet another community.”

“Drunk driving continues to be one of the most preventable tragic occurrences in our nation. No more families should have to mourn the loss of their loved ones due to another individual’s choice,” said Representative McKinley. “I’m proud to see my colleagues in the Senate support the use of drunk driving prevention technology in vehicles, in so doing we can prevent any further tragedies.”

“During my tenure as Nassau County District Attorney on Long Island, and throughout my time in Congress, I have made combating drunk driving one of my top priorities,” said Representative Kathleen Rice. “Prosecution and law enforcement strategies are critically important in this effort, but the best way to prevent drunk driving fatalities is to stop anyone who is under the influence from getting behind the wheel in the first place. That’s why I am proud to co-lead the HALT Drunk Driving Act in the House with Representatives Dingell and McKinley, which will prevent drunk drivers from operating a vehicle by requiring drunk driving prevention technology in all new cars. I thank Senators Luján and Scott for introducing their companion bill, the RIDE Act, in the Senate.”

Americans support Congressional action to require drunk driving prevention technology as standard equipment in all new vehicles, according to a new nationwide poll conducted by Ipsos for MADD. The survey found that 9 of 10 Americans support technology that is integrated into a car’s electronics to prevent drunk driving (89% say it is a good or very good idea ), while 3 of 4 (77%) back Congressional action to require this technology in all new vehicles. More broadly, 8 of 10 (83%) believe that new auto safety features should be standard in vehicles as they become available, not part of optional equipment packages.

“Both the RIDE Act and HALT Act give the auto industry a reasonable period of time to include drunk driving prevention technologies as standard equipment in all new cars,” said MADD’s Otte. “With 10,000 lives lost to drunk driving every year, this technology cannot be optional.”

For more information about the RIDE Act and the HALT Act and vehicle technology to stop drunk driving, please visit [madd.org/HALT/RIDEAct](http://madd.org/HALT/RIDEAct).

#### About Mothers Against Drunk Driving

Founded in 1980 by a mother whose daughter was killed by a drunk driver, Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) is the nation’s largest nonprofit working to end drunk driving, help fight drugged driving, support the victims of these violent crimes and prevent underage drinking. MADD has helped to save more than 400,000 lives, reduce drunk driving deaths by more than 50 percent and promote designating a non-drinking driver. MADD’s Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving® calls for law enforcement support, ignition interlocks for all offenders and advanced vehicle technology. MADD has provided supportive services to nearly one million drunk and drugged driving victims and survivors at no charge through local victim advocates and the 24-Hour Victim Help Line 1-877-MADD-HELP. Visit [www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org) or call 1-877-ASK-MADD.



#### About The Survey

The poll was conducted March 5th to March 7th, 2021 by Ipsos using their KnowledgePanel®. This poll is based on a nationally representative probability sample of 1,016 general population adults age 18 or older, with a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

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