

ROBERT E. LATTA
5TH DISTRICT, OHIO

DEPUTY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
DIGITAL COMMERCE AND
CONSUMER PROTECTION
CHAIRMAN

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3505

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2448 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
(202) 225-6405

DISTRICT OFFICES:
1045 NORTH MAIN STREET
SUITE 6
BOWLING GREEN, OH 43402
(419) 354-8700

101 CLINTON STREET
SUITE 1200
DEFIANCE, OH 43512
(419) 782-1996

318 DORNEY PLAZA
ROOM 302
FINDLAY, OH 45840
(419) 422-7791

Written Testimony for Ohio Senate Transportation, Commerce and Workforce Committee
June 27, 2018

I am very proud of the years I served in the Ohio State Senate and as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. In that role, I worked to advance legislation to benefit the state of Ohio. Now, in Washington, D.C. I continue to drive legislation that will benefit both Ohio and the entire country.

Beginning in January 2017, I led the Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection Subcommittee, of which I chair, in developing legislation regarding self-driving vehicles. The promise of self-driving technology to save thousands of lives in the U.S. and around the world cannot be underestimated.

Safety is our first priority. With traffic fatalities on the rise for the first time in decades, it is more important now than ever to get a safety framework in place to advance life-saving automotive technology. This is personal for every American who has their own story or a story of a loved one involved in an accident. The stats are worth repeating:

- More than 37,000¹ people lost their lives on U.S. highways in 2016, and that statistic unfortunately keeps rising.
- Ninety-four percent of accidents are attributable to human error, including driver distraction and inattention.²

With self-driving cars, there is a real opportunity to save lives, increase mobility, and support American innovation. Targeted self-driving vehicle legislation will ensure that we keep the investment and development of these potentially life-saving vehicles here in the U.S.

I authored the SELF DRIVE Act (H.R. 3388), which is a bipartisan bill that was passed out of the Energy and Commerce Committee by a vote of 54-0 last August. We also passed the legislation unanimously out of the House of Representatives on September 6th, 2017.

The SELF DRIVE Act is a product of months of work, including over 300 meetings with stakeholders, to develop legislation to provide a clear safety framework that allows this technology to develop safely with proper oversight. Innovation can flourish without the heavy hand of government.

¹ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/usdot-releases-2016-fatal-traffic-crash-data>

² <https://www.nhtsa.gov/equipment/driver-assistance-technologies>

The SELF DRIVE Act prioritizes consumer safety, aims to reduce traffic-related fatalities, and clarifies federal and state roles around emerging automated vehicle technologies. The federal government will maintain its role as the safety regulator and states will maintain their traditional roles including insurance, licensing and traffic enforcement.

The legislation updates the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) to account for advances in technology and evolution of highly automated vehicles (HAVs). Additionally, the legislation maximizes opportunities for research and development here in the U.S. to create jobs and grow economic opportunities so that the U.S. can remain a global leader in the auto industry. The underpinning safety technology, like automatic emergency braking, is already being integrated into new cars, but there is still much testing that needs to occur to pave the way for fully self-driving cars.

These vehicles are being designed and built from the ground up and cyber security is at the forefront of their design. Ohio is well positioned to lead the nation when it comes to development and testing of self-driving vehicles. I visited the Transportation Research Center in East Liberty last year, and on that trip, I met the people that are dedicated to ensuring that as cars become more sophisticated, they are both safe and secure. This work, along with the Governor's Executive Order, and the work being done here today is important for Ohio to continue to lead.

The auto industry is responsible for 7.25 million jobs³ nationwide and drives \$953 billion into the economy each year⁴ through producing sales, and servicing of autos. Auto production is the country's largest manufacturing sector: 13 OEMs; 44 assembly plants, in 14 states, invested \$46B in U.S. factories and facilities between 2010 and 2014. The industry directly employs over 1.5 million people engaged in designing, engineering, manufacturing and supplying parts and components to assemble, sell and service new motor vehicles.

It is clear that companies are serious about this technology by the investments they are making—all the way down the supply chain from traditional OEMs, to new tech entrants, to suppliers, and Ohio is already benefitting from this investment.

This technology has the potential to be transformative for all Americans – not just people that can drive today. For example, seniors who are looking for reliable transportation options when rural and suburban public transportation options are slim. The disability community would see a complete transformation of their mobility options – which means new freedoms.

More than six million individuals with disabilities report difficulty in obtaining access to transportation.⁵ Barriers to adequate transportation contribute to employment, education and income. Self-driving cars have the potential to offer individuals with disabilities improved mobility options which will help address their transportation issues.

³ <https://autoalliance.org/economy/>

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ https://www.bts.gov/sites/bts.dot.gov/files/legacy/publications/special_reports_and_issue_briefs/issue_briefs/number_03/pdf/entire.pdf

Approximately one in every five people, or more than 56 million, has a disability in the United States.⁶ More than half of those with disabilities report that their disability severely limits functionality or participatory activity.⁷

Simple things most of us take for granted, such as going to the local grocery store or across town to visit family, will no longer present insurmountable obstacles to those who cannot drive.

Currently, there are approximately 8.4 million⁸ senior citizens who must depend on others for transportation. And, according to recent reports, by 2030 the number of drivers over the age of 85 is expected to be 4-5 times what it is today. Self-driving cars will allow senior citizens to remain independent rather than rely on others to be mobile. Self-driving cars will not only substantially improve the safety of our roadways, but also improve the lives of those who are currently homebound

The SELF DRIVE Act establishes a streamlined path for the safe testing, development, and deployment of self-driving cars in the U.S. and supports NHTSA as the nation's auto safety regulator. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the United States Senate to get this bill to the President's desk. I also look forward to working with all of the interested parties in Ohio to ensure American innovation can flourish in our great state.

⁶ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/miscellaneous/cb12-134.html>

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ <http://www.caregiverslibrary.org/caregivers-resources/grp-transportation/transportation-and-the-elderly-article.aspx>