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America tells Secretary Buttigieg in over 16,000 comments to overhaul vehicle safety

Washington, D.C.--For the first time in U.S. history, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has taken initial steps to help ensure vehicles are safer for people *outside* cars. Its new rulemaking for the New Car Assessment Program (NCAP) would finally rate cars — on a five-star scale — based on protections for pedestrians. By the close of the public comment period on June 8th, thousands of Americans had voiced their support and had submitted over 16,000 comments, many of which encouraged NHTSA to go even further.

The sheer volume of comments (**over forty times** the amount NHTSA received when it last proposed to update NCAP in 2015) demonstrates the public demand for safer vehicles designs that protect people on foot, on bikes, and using mobility devices. It comes less than a month after NHTSA released its 2021 traffic fatality data that indicates a total of 8,327 pedestrians and cyclists were killed by motor vehicles, an 11.7% increase from the previous year and a 40-year high.

Thousands of comments called for NHTSA to take on excessive vehicle size, poor visibility from the driver's seat, and driving over the speed limit, the three primary factors contributing to pedestrian deaths. Commenters also told NHTSA consumer choice guided by NCAP ratings might encourage safer vehicles, but the rising toll of deaths and injuries on our streets demands more.

"Vehicle safety standards that save the lives of people outside cars shouldn't be optional," said Mike McGinn, Executive Director of America Walks. "If NHTSA is serious about making streets safe for everyone on them, it needs to establish requirements that directly tackle vehicle size, visibility, and speed."

Based on this overwhelming public demand, America Walks asks Secretary Buttigieg and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration not to leave the safety of pedestrians and cyclists to consumer choice. NHTSA mandates equipment like seatbelts and airbags that protect vehicle occupants through its Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards; it should do the same for designs and technologies that save the lives of people outside cars.

To learn more about NCAP and America Walks' campaign to make vehicles safer for people outside them, visit americawalks.org/update-vehicle-safety/.

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