



## STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

Chris Ray Swonger, President and CEO  
Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility and Distilled Spirits Council of the United States

Subcommittee on Surface Transportation, Maritime, Freight, and Ports  
Driving Innovation: The Future of Automotive Mobility, Safety, and Technology

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The Foundation for Advancing Alcohol Responsibility (Responsibility.org) and The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS) are proud to support the Reducing Impaired Driving for Everyone (RIDE) Act, sponsored by Senator Lujan (D-NM) and Senator Scott (R-FL). This legislation has the potential to virtually eliminate drunk driving when installed as standard equipment on all new motor vehicles according to a study from The [Insurance Institute for Highway Safety published in July 2020](#).

Drunk driving deaths are preventable. Over the last 40 years many laws have been passed and countless programs implemented to successfully reduce drunk driving by 50 percent. However, every year nearly 10,000 people still die in the United States in a drunk driving crash and many more are injured.

More than 15 years ago, efforts began to develop advanced vehicle technology to prevent a drunk driver from operating a vehicle. The goal was to create a passive technology to automatically detect impairment, that would be unobtrusive to sober drivers, accurate, reliable and affordable. Now, technology exists to achieve this goal. There are two types of technologies that hold promise:

- **Driver monitoring** can detect signs of distracted, impaired or fatigued driving. For example, Volvo is adding sensors and cameras to its vehicles aimed at enhancing safety by monitoring drivers for signs of being drunk, impaired by drugs or distracted and intervening to prevent crashes.
- **Alcohol detection** uses sensors to determine that a driver is at or above the legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit of .08 and then prevent the vehicle from moving.

The RIDE Act is a technology-neutral approach that mandates a rulemaking process at the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. This will allow the best technologies to be tested and to determine their feasibility, and ultimately help ensure installation of this lifesaving technology throughout new vehicles.

be tested and move forward in the next few years. If needed, the RIDE Act allows NHTSA to request time extensions. The companion bill, the HALT Act, already passed the U.S. House of Representatives last year as part of the transportation infrastructure bill.

Americans support the use of this technology as standard equipment in all new vehicles to prevent drunk driving, according to a nationwide poll conducted by Ipsos for Mothers Against Drunk Driving® (MADD) this March. The survey found that:

- Nine 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).
- Three of four (77%) back Congressional action to require this technology in all new vehicles.
- Eight of 10 (83%) believe that new auto safety features should be standard in vehicles as they become available, not part of optional equipment packages.

A federally mandated safety standard is needed to move this lifesaving technology from the research and development stage into an installation requirement for all new automobiles.

In conclusion, DISCUS and Responsibility.org are dedicated to eliminating drunk and impaired driving from America's roadways. We know bold, innovative approaches are required to reduce crashes and save lives. New technology ultimately may help prevent drunk, drugged, and multiple substance-impaired driving, as well as distracted driving and fatigued driving. The RIDE Act would help bring this technology to American automobiles and is fundamental to preventing impaired driving fatalities in the future.

#### **About Responsibility.org**

Responsibility.org is a national not-for-profit that aims to eliminate drunk driving and work with others to end all impaired driving, eliminate underage drinking, and empowers adults to make a lifetime of responsible alcohol choices as part of a balanced lifestyle. Responsibility.org is funded by the following distillers: Bacardi U.S.A., Inc.; Beam Suntory Inc.; Brown-Forman; DIAGEO; Edrington, Mast-Jägermeister US, Inc.; Moët Hennessy USA; Ole Smoky, LLC; and Pernod Ricard USA. For nearly 30 years, Responsibility.org has transformed countless lives through programs that bring individuals, families, and communities together to inspire a lifetime of responsible alcohol choices. To learn more, please visit [www.Responsibility.org](http://www.Responsibility.org).

#### **About The Distilled Spirits Council of the United States (DISCUS)**

The [Distilled Spirits Council of the United States](http://www.Discus.org) is the leading voice and advocate for distilled spirits in the U.S., advocating on legislative, regulatory and public affairs issues impacting the distilled spirits sector at the local, state, federal and international levels. DISCUS members are committed to responsibility and encourage adults who drink to do so in moderation.