



# LIMOUSINE SAFETY ACTION PLAN

116<sup>th</sup> Congress

House: Paul D. Tonko (NY-20) & Antonio Delgado (NY-19)

Senate: Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)

## The SAFE Limos Act of 2019

“Safety, Accountability, and Federal Enforcement of Limos Act of 2019”

### Safety Belt Standards for Limousines

Under current law, limousines with a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 8,500 pounds are not required to have lap shoulder belts for every seating position. The SAFE Limos Act will require each new limousine to have lap and shoulder belts that meet minimum safety requirements for each designated seating position.

### Seating System Standards for Limousines

Limousines manufacturers are not required to meet minimum safety standards for seats, their attachment assemblies, and their installation to minimize the possibility of seats failing during a crash. The SAFE Limos Act will require each new limousine to meet safety requirements for seat strength and integrity.

### Retrofit Assessment for Existing Limousines

The SAFE Limos Act will require the Secretary of Transportation to evaluate the feasibility of retrofitting existing limousines with lap and shoulder belts and seat systems that meet minimum safety requirements.

### Safety Standards for Altering Used Vehicles into Limousines

The modern limousine market is made up of several independent manufacturers that purchase and modify new or used vehicles into limousines. Under current law, a limousine manufacturer that modifies a new vehicle into a limousine must certify that the altered vehicle still conforms will federal safety standards, such as side impact protections and roof crush resistance. Modifiers of used vehicles (i.e., vehicles that have been sold at least once, other than for resale), however, are not required to certify that their vehicles meet federal safety standards. The SAFE Limos Act requires limousine manufacturers altering used vehicles to certify that the limousine meets federal safety standards.

### Limousine Compliance with Federal Safety Standards

To assist limousine manufacturers in complying with federal safety standards, some automakers have created programs detailing what manufacturing limousine alterers should meet to ensure their altered motor vehicle complies with federal safety standards. Unfortunately, not all limousine alterers adhere to these programs. The SAFE Limos Act directs the Secretary of Transportation to develop and issue guidelines, best practices, and recommendations to assist a limousine alterer develop and administer a vehicle modifier plan. A limousine alterer is required to develop a vehicle modifier plan, subject to approval by the Secretary.

## **Limousine Crash Safety**

Limousines are typically equipped with perimeter seating, in which the back of the seats lie against the interior of the passenger compartment. Such alternate seating arrangements can pose unique dangers to occupants. Further, side-impact protections are inconsistent across the limousine industry. The SAFE Limos Act directs NHTSA to conduct research into crashworthiness including side impact protection, roof crush resistance, and air bag system protections for all limousine occupants given alternative seating positions or interior configurations, including perimeter seating arrangements. NHTSA's findings should inform vehicle modifier plans.

## **Limousine Evacuation**

Rapid egress from a vehicle after a crash can make the difference between life and death. Pursuant to prior recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), the SAFE Limos Act will direct NHTSA to conduct research and issue standards that can aid egress and regress in the event that one exit in the limousine's passenger compartment is blocked.

## **Limousine Inspection Disclosure**

The SAFE Limos Act will require a limousine operator introducing a limousine into interstate commerce to disclose:

1. Date of the most recent inspection of the limousine required under state or federal law;
2. The results of the inspection; and
3. Any corrective action taken by the limousine operator to ensure the limousine passes inspection.

## **Event Data Recorders for Limousines**

Event Data Recorders are devices installed in motor vehicles that collect valuable information about the nature of crashes to aid investigations. The SAFE Limos Act would require the use of Event Data Recorders for all new limousines.

# **The Take Unsafe Limos Off the Road Act**

## **Impoundment or Immobilization of Limos that Fail Inspection**

This act will create a new grant program to support states' efforts to impound or immobilize vehicles that fail inspection for critical safety reasons. The New York State Assembly and Senate are working on legislation that allows for the immobilization or impoundment of limousines where such vehicle has an out-of-service defect or a defect related to its horn. The act will incentivize states like New York to take strong actions to keep unsafe limos that fail inspection off the road.

# **The End the Limo Loophole Act**

## **Ensure Limos Comply with Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Regulations**

Currently, a Commercial Motor Vehicle is defined as one that is designed to transport more than 15 passengers, including the driver. Vehicles that are altered post-manufacture to accommodate more than 9 passengers, as with many stretch limos, fall outside this definition. This act will amend the definition of a Commercial Motor Vehicle to ensure that it covers all vehicles used to transport 9 or more people so that critical federal safety rules, such as driver qualifications, apply regardless of the initial design.

## **Annual State Limo Inspection Requirement**

The act would require the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to restart a dormant rulemaking effort requiring states to inspect all commercial motor vehicles designed or used to transport passengers.