

Written Statement of, Alexander C. Brangman, for the Record
Submitted to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportations' Subcommittee on
Consumer Protection, Product Safety, Insurance and Data Security
For its hearing: Update on NHTSA and Automaker Efforts to Repair Defective Takata Air Bag Inflators
March 20, 2018

Good afternoon, I am Alexander Brangman, father of Takata airbag fatality and victim, Jewel Brangman.

I would like to thank Chairman Moran, and fellow members of this committee for the opportunity to submit a statement to you today on behalf of Takata victims and their families and the American public, regarding, the critical and life-threatening issue, of the Takata airbag recall.

Today's hearing is extremely important and I'm thankful to the committee for its leadership and time in evaluating and addressing this ongoing, grave threat to public safety.

I represent the worst-case scenario of incompetence, poor ethics and greed. My daughter came into this world with a birth certificate and she left with a death certificate, at the age of 26 years, 11 months, 9 hours and 15 minutes... due to extreme negligence and unethical conduct, of systemic corporate behavior that puts profits over lives.

One would never think, that when you put all the effort into raising a child to the level of extraordinary accomplishments that my Jewel rose to: from high school Academic All-American, State Champion & Pre-Olympic gymnast; to double major college graduate; to Master's Degree in communication media arts and journalism; and then about to embark on her Ph.D. at Stanford University, in family therapy... that something that was preventable could impede her progress and dreams, to try to make our society a better place for us all. A mechanism that is supposed to save lives is not supposed to be the reason for taking lives.

The unnecessary practice of putting profits over lives must stop. A call of action, nationally, needs to be taken, laws need to be enacted and a competent system needs to be put in place. It needs to be expedited and taken seriously because too many lives are in perilous danger.

Albert Einstein once said, "We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them." In this same light, if we continue to protect the perpetrators of such nefarious and incorrigible actions, more lives will be taken, more families shattered, and more hearts will be broken.

We need leadership and accountability from our legislators, regulators and partners, not culprits like Takata, who continue to disregard industry standards by using unstable ammonium nitrate in their airbags; not culprits like Ford and GM, who seek 2 and 3 exemptions from the recall in the continuance of profits over lives and public safety. Unfortunately, this is not the first time such despicable behavior has led to an extreme loss of life, where corporations have calculated profits over lives, as evidenced by the Pinto, Firestone, GM ignition switch and Toyota SUA cases. However, this esteemed committee has the opportunity to lead by example.

I urge the committee and participants to enact stricter standards for recall completion rates that are unacceptable and severely lagging; to prohibit the use of ammonium nitrate in airbags; to fix our flawed recall system that puts used car owners at a disadvantage in receiving recall notices, to prohibit the sale of used vehicles with open safety recalls; to require all automakers to provide loaner vehicles and tows; to require the use of mobile repair units, just to name a few.

My purpose now, is to bring awareness to those who are not aware of the seriousness of this issue, to honor my daughter, save lives and advocate for the necessary changes that will efficiently and effectively remove these deadly airbags that endanger the lives of our children, loved ones and fellow Americans on a daily basis.

Thank you for your time and attention in considering this statement and the serious issue at hand. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can be of any further assistance in helping to save lives.