

First, I would like to thank each of our witnesses for joining us for today's very important discussion. Few innovations have had as great an impact on the modern world as the automobile. Over the last one hundred years, the auto industry has helped our country achieve some of its greatest successes. From creating millions of jobs that have supported generation after generation of middle class families, to using its manufacturing prowess to help America win World War II, to fostering some of the most cutting-edge technological developments that the world has ever known.

It's no exaggeration to say that the invention of the automobile quite literally transformed society as we know it. And I'm proud that Michigan has played a leading role in these achievements, but as fascinating as auto history is, we're here not to talk about the past. We're here to talk about the future. And that's an exciting topic because the possibilities are endless.

And there's no question we're at a crossroads now when it comes to mobility. How do we maintain our leadership on the global stage? How do we seize this opportunity to ensure mobility innovation is just as transformative as the invention of the automobile itself?

I want to start by addressing the most important topic first – safety. Almost 40,000 people die each year in crashes on U.S. roads, but those are more than just statistics. Those are husbands and wives, sons and daughters, loved ones and close friends. Each and every year, families all across our country are forced to grieve the losses that occur on our roads and highways. There must be a better way to address safety on our roads. Whether it's incorporating new technologies, or improving safety rules, we must take action. Doing so will literally save lives. That's why I'm committed to comprehensively working to improve safety. This includes efforts like passing legislation, such as the *RIDE Act*, which we will hear about today, so that we can spare families from preventable tragedies.

I'm also committed to working with the auto industry to achieve a future where technology innovation and the contributions of autoworkers solve some of the most pressing challenges that we face. One of the most important opportunities we can seize is autonomous vehicle technologies. We know that autonomous vehicles save lives since 90% of accidents are caused by human error. We know that these technologies are also rapidly emerging and are already impacting the workforce. And we know that our competitors on a global stage, especially China, are recognizing the benefits of these technologies. And let's be clear, let's be absolutely clear, these technologies are coming inevitably.

If we want to continue being the mobility capital of the world, we must allow innovation to continue, and we cannot afford to wait until countries like China seize the moment. Allowing for the safe testing, the research, development and deployment of these technologies will not only cement American leadership, but bring with that economic growth and good paying jobs with improved safety.

And that's why I'm committed to working with the auto industry, stakeholders, my colleagues in Congress and the Biden Administration to ensure we can update federal rules and allow these technologies to emerge safely. And with your help, Congress can chart a very bright future for our country. A future where innovation improves mobility for our communities, while also

protecting the environment. A future that transforms mobility and the way that our society operates for the better. A future where we grow manufacturing jobs here in the United States to support a new century of opportunity for middle class Americans. And a future where new technologies prevent the kind of tragedy that struck the Abbas family.