



# NEWS

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## New CAFÉ Standards Dangerous at Any Speed

*Senate vote today will determine the safety of drivers on America's roads.*

WASHINGTON — Fuel economy or safety on America's roads? The controversial debate hits the floor of the United States Senate today, where a new, promising compromise emphasizes safety.

Senators Carl Levin (D-Mich.) and Christopher Bond (R-Mo.) today introduced compromise legislation that would return authority over corporate average fuel economy (CAFÉ) mileage standards to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Backed by both the auto industry and President Bush, the bill would allow NHTSA to finally put safety considerations, as well as job impact, first on the agenda for fuel economy standards.

**The National Academy of Sciences estimates that the lighter vehicles resulting from increased CAFE standards have led to more than 40,000 additional highway deaths since 1975, because higher standards require automakers to strip weight from cars, making them less safe.**

CAFE standards were first introduced in 1975 in response to the OPEC embargo on oil imports. Yet, for the last six years, Congress has refused to fund a NHTSA review of existing fuel economy standards. NHTSA is the government agency responsible for improving the safety of vehicles, often through mandates for increased reinforcement and additional protective equipment.

Taxpayer advocate Grover Norquist, who heads Americans for Tax Reform in Washington, argues, **“Raising CAFÉ standards by legislative whim is foolish and dangerous. Changing them cautiously, based on solid research and thorough study, is sensible and safe. The drivers of America deserve better than to be forced into tin can transportation pods light enough to meet unrealistically high CAFE requirements, and they definitely deserve better than to be forced to pay more for those flimsy cars.”**

Earlier this year, the Bush administration unveiled its Freedom Car plan, which promotes development of a hydrogen-powered fuel cell vehicle. Meanwhile, last week in Detroit, Ford pledged to make hybrid Escape SUVs, which Ford expects to average 40 mpg. These are only two of several new proposals to help lessen foreign oil dependency and pollution.

*Americans for Tax Reform is a non-partisan coalition of taxpayers and taxpayer groups who support tax simplification and oppose all federal and state tax increases. For more information or to arrange an interview please contact Jonathan Collegio at (202) 785-0266 or by email at [jcollegio@atr.org](mailto:jcollegio@atr.org)*

**“The other options to America’s fuel dilemmas are numerous. The safety and freedom of drivers needs to come first; forty-thousand lives is too much to sacrifice on the altar of environmental correctness,”** concluded Norquist.