



National Conference of State Legislatures Office of State-Federal Relations

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Congressional Efforts on Autonomous Vehicles Begins to Take Shape

On June 13, Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson and Senator Gary Peters introduced a set of principles on self-driving vehicle legislation. The six principles outlined include:

- Prioritizing safety to ensure federal standards should eventually be set.
- Promoting innovation and reducing roadblocks by ensuring that existing rules are updated to account for this new technology.
- Remaining tech neutral to avoid favoring one business model over another.
- Reinforcing separate federal and state roles to ensure the federal government sets vehicle safety standards while states regulate the driver while also making targeted updates for this new technology.
- Strengthening cybersecurity to ensure the vehicles are safe to operate.
- Educating the public around the differences between conventional and self-driving vehicles.

Additionally, on June 15, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection released a set of 14 bills all focusing on a different aspect related to autonomous vehicles. Generally, the package of includes aims to:

- Potentially prohibit states and cities from potentially regulating vehicle operation but clarifies their jurisdiction over registration, licensing and other additional activities.
- Expand exemptions on current federal motor vehicle safety standards (FMVSS).
- Establish three advisory committees to address mobility access for people with disabilities, seniors and people underserved by public transit, and examine cybersecurity and data sharing issues.
- Prevent National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) from attempting to verify vehicle designs before they go to market, more commonly referred to as pre-market approval.

NCSL staff remains highly engaged with both committees to ensure that the final form of any bill does not pre-empt or prevent a state from taking necessary action to address this groundbreaking technology. To learn more, please visit [NCSL's public database](#) for more information on state action regarding autonomous vehicles and we encourage all to join us in Boston for NCSL's 2017 Legislative Summit, which will feature a session on autonomous vehicles.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact NCSL staff [Ben Husch](#) (202-624-7779) or [Kristen Hildreth](#) (202-624-3597).