

**Remarks Prepared for
David Strickland
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

**Fitzgerald Auto Mall
40,000 Car Seats Checked Press Event
Rockville, Maryland
May 19, 2011**

Good morning. I'd like to thank Jack Fitzgerald for the invitation to be here. I'd like to acknowledge Governor O'Malley, Senator Mikulski (invited), Congressman Van Hollen (Invited), Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett, Montgomery County Police Chief Mangers, and Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Chief (invited).

On behalf of U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and the entire Department of Transportation, I thank Jack Fitzgerald for his sustained commitment to child passenger safety. Congratulations to you and the entire Fitzgerald Auto Mall family of employees for making child passenger safety integral to your operations, particularly the more than 100 employees who have earned their certification as Child Passenger Safety technicians since 1999.

You ensure safety is at the top of every family's priority list. You understand that safety has to start with the family. And because of your collective efforts, today, 40,000 children are that much safer and have been that much safer since you began your program in 1999.

As we in the safety community know too well, any gains we make are predicated on collaboration. Your leadership in the arena of children's safety rests squarely on the dedication and hard work of many people who have a passion for protecting children from traffic crashes.

In particular, I'd like to acknowledge the extensive support that the Montgomery County law enforcement and fire and rescue communities have provided for this long-term effort to educate parents and caregivers on the proper use of car seats. And I'd like to thank the Montgomery County Council and County Executive Ike Leggett for their leadership in and support of this effort over the years.

And last, but certainly not least, I'd like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of the Montgomery County Safe Kids Coalition, led by Emilie Crown, which has worked side-by-side with Fitzgerald Auto Mall and county and State agencies to conduct the monthly inspection events and other efforts to make Montgomery County a safer place for kids.

We know without question that car seats, booster seats and seat belts save lives. From 1975 through 2008, NHTSA estimates that almost 9,000 children were saved in crashes because they were restrained in car seats or seat belts.

But we have so much more work to do. The misuse of car seats remains a big problem and motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among children ages 3 to 14. Our latest numbers tell us that every day in the United States, an average of 4 children younger than 14 were killed and 529 were injured in motor vehicle crashes.

As part of our ongoing work to fix this problem, NHTSA recently updated the guidelines for parents and caregivers on proper selection and use of - appropriate child restraints. You can see these recommendations on our website at [nhtsa.gov](https://www.nhtsa.gov). We also continue to reach out to parents and caregivers to urge them to use the LATCH system – which was designed to reduce car seat misuse by making installation easier. We continue to work with our partners in State governments, Safe Kids USA and other national partners in the non-profit and private sectors to maintain our nationwide network of certified technicians.

Once again, congratulations to everyone in the Fitzgerald family for working so hard for so long to protect children – our most precious national resource. Thank you.