

Few inventions have had as great an impact on the modern world as the automobile.

Over the last hundred years, the auto industry has helped our country achieve some of its greatest successes -- from creating millions of jobs that have supported generations of middle class families -- to using its manufacturing prowess to help America win WWII -- to fostering some of the most cutting-edge technological developments the world has ever known.

It's no exaggeration to say that the invention of the automobile quite literally transformed society as we knew 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 to talk about the future.

And that is 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.

This subcommittee is honored to have Rana Abbas Taylor testify today.

She is bravely sharing the story of her family members, who were tragically killed by a drunk driver in a horrific incident that shocked the conscience of Michigan -- and the entire nation.

I remember attending the funeral in Dearborn – and the outpouring of support and grief was overwhelming. No family – ever – should have to endure the heartbreak of what happened on January 6, 2019.

On that day -- Issam, Rima, and their three children, Ali, age 13; Isabella, age 12, and Giselle, age 7 – were taken from us. Rana – Rima’s sister – has been an incredible advocate, fighting for change in memory of her sister’s family so that nobody has to go through what she’s been through.

Rana’s incredible advocacy for improving safety is a testament to her family’s memory.

We are grateful for Rana’s dedication to saving lives on America’s roads.

I am committed to working with Rana and other advocates to once and for all pass legislation that will comprehensively address the problem of drunk driving, so that we can spare families from this preventable tragedy in the future.

I am also committed to working with the auto industry to achieve a future where technology, innovation -- and the contributions of our autoworkers solve some of our most pressing challenges.

We will hear from Reuben Sarkar, who leads the American Center for Mobility in Ypsilanti.

Mr. Sarkar will discuss the work they are doing to enhance mobility and, improve equitable access to transportation.

We will also hear from Ann Wilson with from the Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association, MEMA, about the incredible small and medium businesses that power the auto industry's supply chain.

We look forward to learning from MEMA about how we can strengthen our automotive supply chain.

Also joining us today is John Bozzella, President and CEO of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation -- whose members produce almost all cars and light trucks sold in the United States and who collectively employs millions of Americans.

I want to reiterate my gratitude to all of today's witnesses for testifying.

With your help, Congress can chart a bright future for our country.

A future where innovation improves mobility for all our communities - while also protecting the environment.

A future that transforms mobility – and the way 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.