

CENTER FOR AUTO SAFETY

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February 19, 2016

The Honorable Anthony Foxx
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Mark Rosekind
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx & Administrator Rosekind,

The most lethal vehicle safety defect in America today is not the Takata airbag inflator. It's the fuel tank behind the rear axle in the 1993-98 Jeep Grand Cherokee, 1993-01 Cherokee and 2002-07 Liberty that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) investigated in [EA12-005](#). The [Takata airbag inflator has claimed 9 lives in the US](#) since its first use in 2000. [Since June 3, 2013 when NHTSA asked Chrysler to recall](#) the 1993-98 Jeep Grand Cherokee, and 2002-07 Liberty, there have been [47 deaths in fatal fire crashes](#) in the investigated Jeeps, at least 19 of which have been fire deaths according to NHTSA or medical records. The Grand Cherokee and Liberty accounted for 14 of the 19 fire deaths.

Below are three victims of this most lethal defect – 17 year old Skyler Anderson and 24 year olds Chantae and Danny Reed Jr. Skyler's father Todd testified before NHTSA in the Chrysler recall hearings that he would never have let his son drive the Jeep if he had known about the recall but he didn't get a notice until more than a year after Chrysler agreed to a limited recall. Despite his testimony, [NHTSA doesn't even record the death in its FARS records as a Jeep](#).

The Reeds are double defect deaths. Both survived the crash but Mr. Reed's seat back collapsed, trapping him. Mrs. Reed tried to free him from the seat but burned to death with her husband in the effort.



More people will die from fire in recalled Chrysler Jeeps because the recall remedy negotiated behind closed doors by Chrysler-Fiat CEO Sergio Marchionne, DOT Secretary Ray LaHood and NHTSA Administrator David Strickland is totally ineffective. It's a trailer hitch that former [Chrysler Engineering Vice President Francois Castaing testified doesn't protect the fuel tank.](#)

To make matters worse, Chrysler has placed so many barriers in the road of the recall like delayed notices, not making enough parts, not covering vehicles with rust and only checking for OEM trailer that to date more than a [million Jeeps remain unremedied](#) even for the inadequate remedy. This is the recall that Chrysler never wanted to do and will never do right. [When CAS wrote Chrysler CEO Marchionne last year about the climbing burn toll in Jeeps after the so-called recall](#), he never responded. As far as Fiat-Chrysler is concerned Jeeps can continue to crash and burn until they are all off the road.

On January 14, you announced "I'm excited to announce that, today, [DOT and 18 automakers are taking a strong stand](#) --together-- for a new proactive, collaborative approach to safety." The agreement with the automakers was to set forth a [cooperative agreement](#) that would improve safety and fix defects before they killed people. The continuing and climbing burn death toll in Chrysler Jeeps that far surpasses Takata airbag inflators shows that the cooperative agreement is dead on arrival as far as Chrysler is concerned. Without consumer and safety advocates, no agreement can be truly cooperative or protective of safety.

The Center for Auto Safety calls on you as the Secretary of Transportation and as the Administrator of NHTSA to reopen the Jeep fuel tank investigation and obtain a remedy that saves lives versus the fire deaths that will continue to occur if Fiat-Chrysler is left alone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Clarence Ditlow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Clarence Ditlow
Executive Director