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## **AARP, ATSSA Endorse Older Driver Safety Bill Applaud Rep. Altmire for Sponsoring It**

*Washington, D.C.* – AARP and the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA) strongly endorse H.R. 3355, the Older Driver and Pedestrian Safety and Roadway Enhancement Act of 2009, introduced yesterday by Rep. Jason Altmire (D-Penn.)

“It is estimated that by 2025, one in four drivers will be 65 or older,” U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (Penn.-04) said. “Given this fact, we need to make sure we are taking older drivers’ needs into account in our transportation planning. By making improvements that will make roadway hazards more visible and signs easier to read, we can make our roads safer for drivers of all ages.”

David Certner, AARP’s Legislative Policy Director, applauded both the new bill and Rep. Altmire’s leadership. “Congressman Altmire deserves credit not only for introducing this bill,” he said, “but also for having the foresight to recognize that making roads safer for older drivers will make them safer for everyone. Older drivers and teen drivers, their passengers and those who care about them will benefit from investing in safer roads that meet improved standards. As Congress considers updating America’s transportation system, we urge them to also choose to put people and their safety first.”

A recent report from AARP’s Public Policy Institute found that two-thirds of transportation planners and engineers have yet to begin addressing the needs of older Americans in their street planning; yet by 2025, 64 million people will be over the age of 65, and by 2030 a quarter of all U.S. drivers will be over the age of 65.

“This bill will lead America in the right direction when it comes to making driving on our roadways safer for all individuals, including older Americans and pedestrians,” said ATSSA President and CEO Roger Wentz. “As a Representative from Pennsylvania where the older driver population is above the national average, Rep. Altmire fully understands the critical need to ensure that drivers over 65 years old are as safe as possible on the road.”

Most older Americans live in suburbs with limited or no access to public transportation. That percentage will only grow as the Boomer generation reaches traditional retirement age. “As they get older, the first generation raised in the suburbs will still have to rely on their personal automobiles or those of family and friends to get around. Roads designed and built to reduce the risk of crashes will make them and everyone safer,” said Certner.

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The Older Driver and Pedestrian Safety and Roadway Enhancement Act of 2009 will:

- Invest \$500 million annually in roadway safety infrastructure to meet improved federal highway design handbook standards for older drivers and pedestrians, effectively making roadways across the nation safer for all Americans.
- Create a position of Special Assistant for Older Adult Safety and Mobility in the Office of the Secretary of Transportation to contribute an age related focus to DOT activities and programs related to transportation safety, research and services.
- Improve federal standards for roadway signs and road markings to accommodate the vision needs of an older population. The effect will be signs and road markings that are more visible for all.

“Rep. Altmire’s vision in understanding the needs of older Americans is truly inspirational,” said Wentz. “H.R. 3355 is a large step in the right direction in making our friends, parents and grandparents as safe as possible on the road. On behalf of ATSSA, I commend Rep. Altmire for his leadership and commitment to America’s older citizens.”

ATSSA is an international trade association located in Fredericksburg, Va. Since 1969, ATSSA has represented companies and individuals in the traffic control and roadway safety industry. Over 1,600 ATSSA members provide the majority of features, services and devices used to make our nation's roadways safer. These include pavement markings, road signs, work zone traffic control devices, guardrail, and other roadway safety features.

AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 35.5 million readers; *AARP Bulletin*, the go-to news source for AARP's 40 million members and Americans 50+; *AARP Segunda Juventud*, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, [AARP.org](http://AARP.org). AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection and empowerment to older persons in need, with support from thousands of volunteers, donors and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

On the web:

[ATSSA.com](http://ATSSA.com)

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