Good Morning, My name is Heidi Crow-Michael. I would like to thank you all for allowing me to speak today on behalf of my son, J.T. Crow.

I play many roles in life; I am a homemaker and an advocate, but most importantly a mother to five children.

JT Crow is my second child, and first born son, he was a happy and extraordinary 9-year-old boy. At school, he was a straight ‘A’ student, with perfect attendance. He loved science and learning about birds and butterflies. J.T. also loved being outside playing sports like soccer and football.

J.T.’s life was cut short when he went for a ride in a 2007 Yamaha Rhino 450. While riding at a slow speed around a slight curve, the ROV suddenly and inexplicably rolled over. Though J.T. was wearing a safety belt, he was thrown from the Rhino ROV and then crushed by the half-ton vehicle as it rolled over.

Paramedics rushed J.T. to the emergency room but he had sustained more injuries than his young body could handle. My son died that day when he was 9 years old and my life was forever changed. On a daily basis I live with the pain of the tragedy that struck my family and the fear of knowing that it could happen to other families. This fear has led me to become an advocate for ROV safety and industry reform. I have been given the opportunity to use my son’s life to make a difference, a difference that can save lives.

As we sit here this morning, the ROV industry is one that sets its own safety standards and makes its own rules and innocent people are paying the price. I am not against ROVs; I just want
safe ROVs. Many consumers buy ROVs because they have four wheels and sometimes seatbelts, rollbars and roofs and look safer than ATVs. But ROVs are not safe. And it has been many years, and every year, every day, that there is not a better solution implemented for ROV safety, is a day that more people, more children, our children are put at risk.

As we reported in the Citizen Report on Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV) Hazards and Urgent Need to Improve Safety and Performance Standards; February 26, 2009, There is a vital need for ROV manufacturers, their trade group, the Recreational Off Highway Vehicle Association (“ROHVA”), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (“NHTSA”) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (“CPSC”) to adopt rigorous minimum ROV safety standards and performance standards, including minimum occupant containment, stability, and seat belt standards. When we wrote the report, we were hopeful our recommendations for safer ROVs would become standard. We asked for action and nothing happened.

An already unacceptably high casualty rate will continue unless action is taken. In 2014, ROV use resulted in at least 61 deaths and 8 more in 2015. While less stringent than the recommended safety measures in the Citizen Report, the CPSC has proposed standards that would significantly improve ROV safety. If the ROV industry really wants to protect their consumers, why wouldn’t they want to make the safest product possible? Why wouldn’t they want to do all they could to protect the people who purchased their vehicles?

I have been given the opportunity to speak to many families, and we all share a common bond, we have lost someone we love in an ROV rollover accident. Perhaps the most painful part of my role as an advocate for this cause is hearing the heart wrenching stories from those families. I know that I am not alone in asking this Committee to allow the CPSC to move forward with its rulemaking to issue ROV safety standards and to stop the senseless death of our loved ones.

In my journey over the last eight years I have collected the names, and stories of those who shared a fate similar to JT’s, it is for them that I speak today.

For:

Ellie Sand, Age 10
Kristin Lake, Age 11
Dusty Lockabey, Age 14
Ashlyn Vargas, Age 12
Dani Bernard, Age 18
Stephanie Katin, Age 26
Whitney Bland, Age 13
Sydney Anderson, Age 10
Abby West, Age 13
Karen Harwood, Age 46
Andrea Hayes, Age 16
Mikhail Ayrepetyan, Age 56
Lane McCloud, Age 8
Andrew Bahl, Age 3
Lauren Dilworth, Age 11
Emily Bates, Age 11
Cathy Piekarczyk, Age 51
James Spencer, Age 13
Andrea Jones, Age 34 (Mother of 2)
Lindsey Quimby, Age 29
Emily King, Age 20
Cheyenne Ellis, Age 12
Eddie Ray, Age 13
David Morgan, Age 21
Josh Davis, Age 14

All killed in rollover accidents involving the Yamaha Rhino, and the injured
Dwight Grimes (Leg Destroyed)
Sunny Chism (Lost Arm)

Our stories did not begin and end on the day our loved ones were killed or injured. This battle is ongoing for all of us. We will miss soccer games, dance recitals, graduations, birthdays, weddings, and holiday celebrations. We will live with the consequence forever. Today you have the opportunity, and I think, the obligation, to help me honor these young lives, their families, and the life of my son, J.T. Crow, but it is more than that, you have an opportunity to become a part of their story, the part that offers hope for the future by bringing about change. Our request
is simply common sense: it is unimaginable that anyone would feel differently. If you don’t do something about it, can you live with yourself? Delay is a problem. Delay puts our children at risk and it has been too many years and too many tragedies already. We urge you not to contribute to any further delay.

Thank you for your time.

J.T. Crow, age 9, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 6/22/07
Ellie Sand, age 10, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 10/28/07

Parent Contact:
Tammie, John Sand
(513) 209-5556
johnsand@mac.com
Kristin Lake, age 11, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 5/29/06

Parent Contact:
Cindy Schnitker
(259) 795-1013
cindyschnitker@yahoo.com

Dusty Lockabey, age 14, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 8/07/07

Contact info of Fabrice Vincent,
Lief, Cahrasch, Heimann & Bernstein, LLP
(800) 541-7357
lvincen@lcb.com
Ashlyn Vargas, age 12, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 11/29/07

Parent Contact:
Primo Vargas
Michelle
(805) 674-9525
grainkra@yahoo.com

Dani Bernard, age 18, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 11/26/06

Parent Contact:
Bob Berends
(949) 373-1619
(949) 422-3696
bob@berendslawfirm.com
Stephanie Katin, age 26, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 2/23/08

Whitney Bland, age 13, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 5/22/07
Sydney Anderson, age 10, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 11/22/06

Parent Contact:
Jennie Anderson
(259) 623-4272
janderson@me.com

Abby West, age 13, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 11/23/06

Parent Contact:
Jeff, Tracy West
(750) 355-1061
jmbintl@yahoo.com
Karen Harwood, age 46, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 9/10/05
Andrew Bahl, age 3, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 8/24/08

David Morgan, age 21, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 2/22/08
Lauren Dilworth, age 11, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 10/18/08
Emily Bates, age 11, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 10/18/08
Emily King, age 20, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 4/14/07
Eddie Ray, age 13, killed by Yamaha Rhino tipover, died on 9/13/07

Parent Contact: