

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF TEAMSTERS

SEAN M. O'BRIEN

General President

25 Louisiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001



FRED E. ZUCKERMAN

General Secretary-Treasurer

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October 30, 2023

The Honorable Dan Patrick
Lieutenant Governor of the Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Lieutenant Governor Patrick:

We are writing to urge the Texas legislature to take a stand for public safety and oppose autonomous vehicles (AVs) on public roads in Texas.

Cruise, a subsidiary of General Motors, operated self-driving vehicles in Austin from July 2023 up until recently. In that short time period, Cruise vehicles were [a regular source of chaos](#) on Austin city streets, jeopardizing the safety of pedestrians and motorists, ignoring traffic signals, and [blocking traffic](#). [First responders](#) reported that Cruise vehicles hindered rescue operations on city streets, including two instances where they [blocked movements](#) from Austin fire engines.

From July 8 through October 11, Austin received [43 safety complaints](#) from residents about autonomous vehicles, nearly all of them specific to Cruise. The high number of complaints is especially alarming since there were only [50 Cruise autonomous vehicles](#) driving in Austin.

Last month in San Francisco, a Cruise driverless vehicle was involved in a serious accident that left a pedestrian hospitalized with serious injuries. The pedestrian was initially struck by a human-operated vehicle, and then run over by the Cruise driverless vehicle. After coming to a complete stop, the Cruise vehicle started to back up and "[attempted a pullover maneuver](#)" while the pedestrian was pinned underneath, according to the California Department of Motor Vehicles. The pedestrian was then dragged approximately 20 feet by the Cruise vehicle.

The accident report is difficult to stomach. What makes this incident worse is that Cruise [tried to cover it up](#) by failing to provide law enforcement with video footage of the Cruise vehicle dragging the pedestrian after the crash took place. The safety risk associated with Cruise vehicles, coupled with its failure to disclose critical information, forced the California Department of Motor Vehicles to [immediately remove](#) Cruise's autonomous vehicles from city streets. As the DMV made clear, "the manufacturer's [Cruise's] vehicles are not safe for the public's operation." The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration in October [opened investigations](#) into the safety and risks associated with Cruise vehicles.

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Cruise isn't the only AV company that has something to hide when it comes to its safety record - [Waymo](#) and [Tesla](#) have the same issue. If autonomous vehicle companies are willing to withhold critical details related to public safety, how can we possibly trust these out-of-state tech companies to act responsibly and ethically?

Following a wave of negative publicity and numerous operational failures, [Cruise announced on October 26th that they would be suspending its driverless operations nationwide](#). Legislators in Austin should seize on this momentum and deliver a bill that will protect the safety of all Texans who use our roads on a daily basis.

The Teamsters believe that a human operator is needed in every vehicle – and that goes beyond partisan politics. We fought tooth and nail in California to pass AB316, legislation that would require a human being to be present in all vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds. This bill sailed through the California legislature, with strong bipartisan support, as Republicans and Democrats throughout the state rallied around this commonsense idea to keep our streets safe. Ultimately, Governor Newsom bowed to his friends in the tech industry and vetoed AB316, a move that looks especially dangerous and shortsighted after Cruise's many failures. This should be a warning to all of us - Texas is not California, and we simply cannot allow our state to become Big Tech's next playground.

State legislators have a solemn duty in this matter to keep dangerous autonomous vehicles off our streets and keep Texans safe. Autonomous vehicles are not ready for prime time, and we urge you to act before someone in our community gets killed.

Sincerely,

Brent Taylor, Secretary-Treasurer, Teamsters Joint Council 80
International Vice President

Robert Mele, President, Teamsters Joint Council 58

CC: The Honorable Dade Phelan, Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives
The Honorable Robert Nichols, Chairman, Texas Senate Committee on Transportation
The Honorable Terry Canales, Chairman, Texas House Committee on Transportation