

## **Closing Statement**

In closing, I thank my colleagues for their preparation going into the board meeting, and for the good debate and discussion.

My special thanks to Jennifer Morrison, the Investigator-in-Charge of the Baltimore investigation, Michelle Beckjord, the Project Manager, and Robert Acetta, the Investigator-in-Charge of the Chattanooga investigation. But, I also realize that the investigative process involves an entire team, and on behalf of the Board, a sincere “thank you” to the investigative staff for two excellent investigations and the development of this Special Investigation Report.

The recommendations that we issued and reiterated today, if acted on, will help ensure that new school buses are manufactured with tried and true occupant protection such as lap-shoulder belts, as well as collision avoidance technology such as automatic emergency braking.

But regardless of the performance of the bus itself, as long as we have human drivers, we’ll have human error and/or human rule-breaking. That puts human life in danger.

Safety demands oversight that puts lives first—the lives of our children, of other road users, and of the drivers themselves. It demands use of facial recognition data to catch driver license

fraud at every opportunity, with data shared across states. It demands that certified medical examiners effectively play their role in denying medically unfit drivers a medical certificate.

Action on the safety recommendations issued and reiterated today will constitute a crackdown, but only from the point of view of drivers who put the safety of our children and other road users at risk. Such a crackdown is long overdue.

We stand adjourned.

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