

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh

District

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DEATH OF A 4-YEAR-OLD ON EPCOT RIDE UNDERLINES NEED TO CLOSE SAFETY LOOPHOLE

"Mission Number One must be safety," says Markey

Washington, DC: Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA), who has been pressing Congress for several years to close an unusual safety exemption in the law that excludes any federal participation in investigating and preventing deaths on amusement park rides, issued the following comment today following the death of a 4-year-old boy on the Mission: SPACE ride at Disney's EPCOT Center in Orlando, FL:

"The death yesterday of 4-year-old Daudi Bamuwanye from Pennsylvania on an amusement ride in Florida is an unspeakable horror for his family. The questions it raises need to be fully investigated and answered so that this horror is not repeated for any other family.

Unfortunately, the current loophole in the law that prevents any federal safety expert from participating in this investigation is a real impediment to effective safety oversight. Only a federal safety agency is in a position to ensure that this little boy's death is treated not just as a local concern or a concern for one park or owner, but also as a window on safety issues that apply in every amusement park with rides that share characteristics of Mission: SPACE. How are height restrictions determined? Do they rise as the force of the ride increases? Should there be an age restriction as well?

These issues are not unique to a Disney ride in a single park, in single county, in a single state. This information needs to be gathered, recorded, and assessed in a systematic way no matter where the accident occurs, so that prevention measures can be recommended or required on a national, not a local, basis. Mission Number One must be safety, but as long as the law specifically exempts amusement park rides from the oversight of our nation's consumer safety agency, there will be a significantly higher likelihood of other families on other rides becoming future victims. That is wrong, just plan wrong."

Rep. Markey, a senior member of the Energy and Commerce Committee of the House of Representatives, is the author of the National Amusement Park Ride Safety Act, HR 2500. For further information, please <http://www.house.gov/markey/amusement.htm>