



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on January 26, 2026

House Kills Massie's Anti-"Kill Switch" Amendment, Imperiling Drivers' Safety and Freedom

The federal government still has a mandate to impose "kill-switch" technology on new cars thanks to almost 60 Republican congressmen who voted against repealing the requirement Thursday.

The House of Representatives voted 164-268 on an amendment to the \$1.2 trillion minibus spending bill that would have repealed the kill-switch requirement. Fifty-seven Republicans joined nearly all Democrats in opposing the amendment, which was introduced by Representative Thomas Massie (R-Ky.).



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Barr Exam

A provision of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act directs the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to promulgate a rule requiring new cars sold after 2026 to include technology that would "prevent or limit motor vehicle operation" if the technology determines that the driver is drunk or otherwise "impaired."

As is so often the case with government regulations, the kill-switch mandate was sold as a safety measure. Although it could, in some circumstances, save lives, such technology could also endanger them — and Americans' God-given liberties.

Former Georgia Congressman Bob Barr detailed many of these dangers in a 2021 [column](#):

The lack of ultimate control over one's vehicle presents numerous and extremely serious safety issues; issues that *should* have been obvious to Members of Congress before they voted on the measure.

For example, what if a driver is not drunk, but sleepy, and the car forces itself to the side of the road before the driver can find a safe place to pull over and rest? Considering that there are no realistic mechanisms to immediately challenge or stop the car from being disabled, drivers will be forced into dangerous situations without their consent or control.

The choice as to whether a vehicle can or cannot be driven — for vehicles built after 2026 — will rest in the hands of an algorithm over which the car's owner or driver have [sic] neither knowledge nor control. [Emphasis in original.]

Switch Jitters

On top of the physical threats exist serious constitutional ones. Would the continuous monitoring of the driver's condition lead to self-incrimination, violating the Fifth Amendment? Would the driver's inability to challenge an autonomous machine's claim that he was driving under the influence violate the Sixth



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Amendment?

“The looming Orwellian automobile kill switch deadline threatens civil liberties,” Massie [wrote](#) on X Wednesday. “When your car shuts down because it doesn’t approve of your driving, how will you appeal your roadside conviction?”

Then there’s the fact that the law requires the technology to be “open,” meaning there will be a way for outsiders to access the data captured by the technology, if not the switch itself.

This presents privacy issues. Could government agents access the data — or even activate the switch — without a warrant? Who decides what constitutes “impaired” driving? Could hackers use the data for blackmail or shut off someone’s car?

Kill Bill: Volume 2

Killing the kill switch, therefore, should have been a slam dunk for Republicans and even many Democrats. “Still,” observed the [Daily Caller](#),

a group of senior Republicans and those hailing from the moderate faction of the conference helped tank Massie’s amendment.

Republicans who could face difficult reelection bids — Reps. Derrick Van Orden of Wisconsin, Mariannette Miller-Meeks of Iowa and Jen Kiggans of Virginia — joined almost all Democrats in rejecting the measure.

Appropriations Committee chairman Tom Cole of Oklahoma, Homeland Security Committee chairman Andrew Garbarino of New York and Financial Services Committee chairman French Hill of Arkansas also voted “no.”

This is at least the second time Massie has tried to repeal the kill-switch mandate. He [previously attempted it in 2023](#), at which time 19 Republicans joined the pro-kill-switch caucus. Curiously, the vast majority of Republicans who voted no this time around voted yes three years ago (if they were in Congress at that time), while seven who voted no in 2023 voted yes in 2026.

“It is so incredible that I have to offer this amendment,” Massie said in 2023. “It almost sounds like the domain of science fiction, dystopian science fiction, that the federal government would put a kill switch in vehicles that would be the judge, the jury, and the executioner on such a fundamental right as the right to travel freely, but here we are.”

And here we still are. So far, the NHTSA has not proposed a kill-switch rule, but it remains empowered to do so courtesy of representatives who care nothing for their [oath of office](#).

Gutless Blunders

Those who do take their oath seriously, however, offered swift and scathing responses to the kill-switch amendment vote.

[Representative Keith Self \(R-Texas\)](#) called the tally “unbelievably disturbing.”

[Former Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene \(R-Ga.\)](#) pointed out that “pretty much all of” the Republicans who voted against the amendment have been endorsed by President Donald Trump.

“But,” she added sarcastically, “Thomas Massie is baaaddddddd!!!!” — a reference to Trump’s desire



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to [unseat](#) the constitutionalist congressman.

Voting down Massie's amendment wasn't the only GOP betrayal in the minibus bill. As *The New American* reported, the bill also contains [\\$5 billion for a refugee welfare program](#) and ["at least \\$10 million in abortion and transgender funding"](#) — the latter thanks to over 80 Republicans who voted against an amendment sponsored by Representative Ralph Norman (R-S.C.) that would have stripped that funding from the bill.

Why?

According to [Representative Tim Burchett \(R-Tenn.\)](#), "We're gutless and we're compromised and we're not doing what we said we were going to do."

Or, as Self [put it](#), "With Republicans like these, who needs Democrats?"



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