# News from Ed Markey

United States Congress Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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## MARKEY REQUESTS NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH RESEARCH POTENTIAL FOR BRAIN INJURIES FROM RIDING ROLLER COASTERS

*Lawmaker lists coasters with high "g-forces"*

Washington, DC: Rep. Edward Markey (D-MA) sent a letter today to the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) seeking a health baseline for judging the safety implications of rapidly rising "g-forces". "gs" (multiples of gravitational force) measure the stress placed on the human body as a coaster bottoms out of hills, banks around curves, or flips the body upside-down in inversions.

"Not only are these giant coasters exempt from federal safety regulation," Markey noted, "they also operate without any consensus, within the industry or the public health community, about the point at which brain trauma can be triggered in healthy children or adults simply from the snap of the neck or the pressure on blood circulation generated by high g-forces. The industry may think it is thrilling to operate without 'g-force' standards, but the pediatric, medical and public health communities need to be the ultimate judges of what is medically-safe for our children."

Markey's letter to Dr. Ruth Kirschstein, Acting Director of NIH, referred to a recent article in the journal *Neurology* which described chronic subdural hematoma in a previously healthy woman after riding a giant roller coaster. He also referenced a news report on research in France finding that high-speed amusement park rides had led to "minor internal bleeding and small strokes."

Markey also noted that unlike the industry in the United States, the German amusement park industry had adopted "g-force" standards which at least 18 roller coasters in the U.S. appear to exceed. They include coasters at Six Flags AstroWorld (TX); Six Flags Over Texas (TX); Disney MGM Studios (FL); Six Flags America (MD); Paramount King's Island (OH); Six Flags Great Adventure (NJ); Paramount's Great America (IL); Six Flags Magic Mountain (CA); Sea World of Texas (TX); Nascar Café (NV); Paramount King's Island (OH); Six Flags Fiesta Texas (TX); Six Flags Magic Mountain (CA); Paramount King's Dominion (VA) and Busch Garden's Williamsburg (VA).

Rep. Markey is the sponsor of legislation pending in the U.S. House of Representatives to eliminate the exemption from federal safety regulation currently enjoyed by the operators of "fixed-site rides" (e.g., roller coasters.)

The full text of the letter, and attachments, including a table listing high-g-force coasters by name and location, can be found on Rep. Markey's web site at "www.house.gov/markey/issues.htm"

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