

Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. letter	Rova Dowell to Administrator (1 page)	01/10/1997	b(6)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Domestic Policy Council
Elizabeth Drye
OA/Box Number: 10454

FOLDER TITLE:

Seat Belt EO: Support

2014-0046-S

rc1381

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
- P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
- P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
- P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

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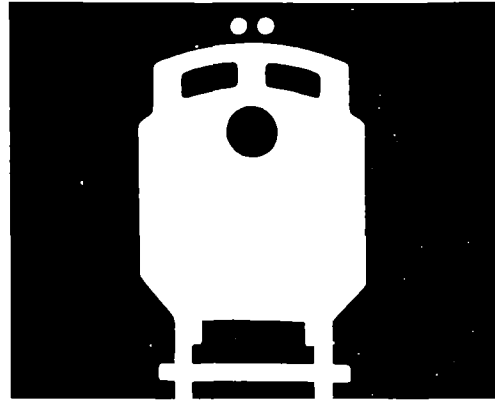
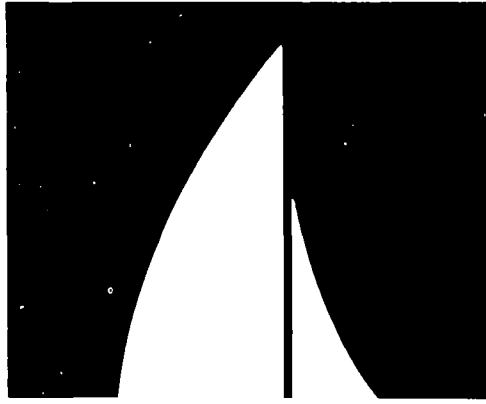
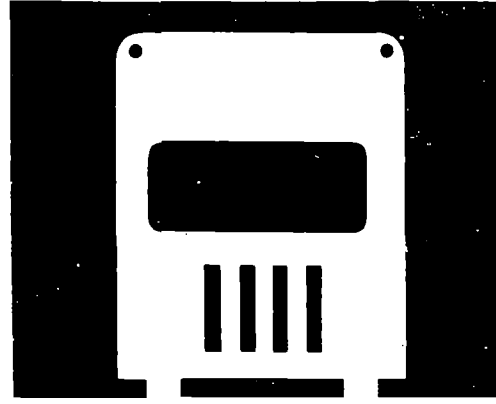
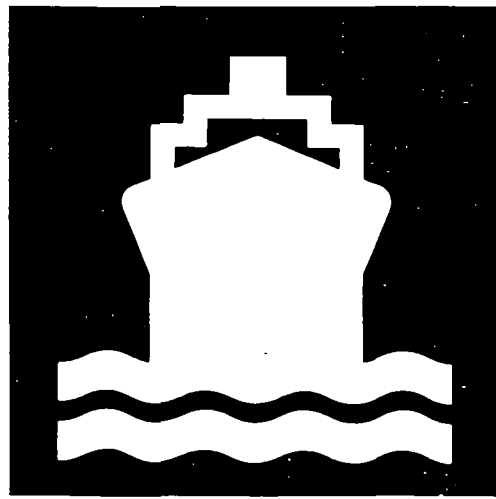
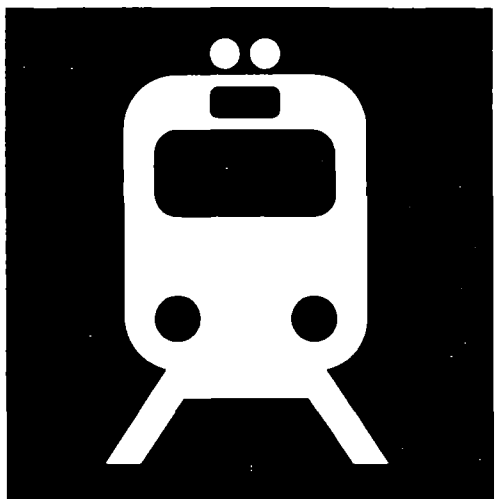
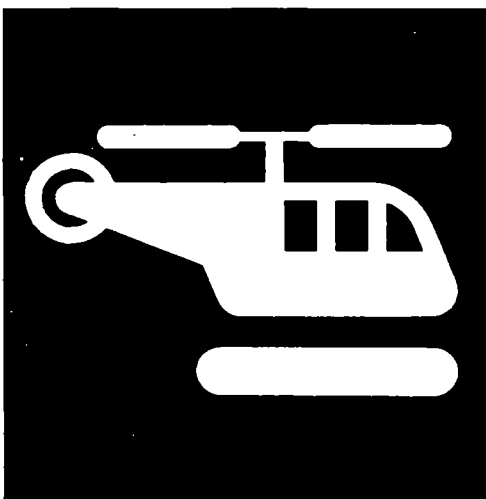
PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

- b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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(202) 366-5807

Statements of Support

HHS NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**For Immediate Release
Wednesday, April 16, 1997**

**Contact: Victor Zonana
202-690-6343**

HHS Secretary Donna E. Shalala issued the following statement in connection with President Clinton's executive order on the use of seat belts:

"Today we send a clear message: Seat belts save lives. With this Presidential Initiative, we seek to mobilize the public and private sectors to encourage all Americans to buckle up. We especially want to educate everyone who comes in contact with children about how to move them safely and keep them healthy.

"We want to make it clear that increasing safety belt use is a public health challenge and a national priority. And we want to continue to work with child care providers, Head Start and other caring adults to create a Safe America for all our citizens - especially our children."

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**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****NEWS**

**FOR RELEASE
April 16, 1997**

**Contact: David Thomas
(202) 401-1579**

**STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF EDUCATION RICHARD W. RILEY
On the presidential initiative to increase seat belt usage nationwide**

"Seat belts and child safety seats are known lifesavers," Riley said. "At the department of education, we are encouraging the use of seat belts and child safety seats, and we are working to provide educational information on traffic safety."

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AIR BAG SAFETY: BUCKLE EVERYONE! CHILDREN IN BACK!
STATEMENT BY JANET DEWEY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AIR BAG SAFETY CAMPAIGN

**ON ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PRESIDENTS PLAN TO
 INCREASE SEAT BELT USE
 APRIL 16, 1997**

The Air Bag Safety Campaign applauds President Clinton's plan to increase seat belt use in America. The proven approaches in the plan can save countless lives. It is the right thing to do, especially now with the nation's attention focused on the significant role that seat belts play in air bag safety.

The strategy outlined in the plan boils down to a three-pronged approach — educate, enact, enforce — essentially the same strategy that the Air Bag Safety Campaign is using to maximize the lifesaving capabilities of air bags while minimizing the risks.

We hope to work closely with the government to support the implementation of the seat belt plan, just as we have worked as partners in promoting air bag safety. We are proud that Operation ABC: Mobilizing America To Buckle Up Children will be the first major, national initiative in support of the President's plan.

In partnership with the International Association of the Chiefs of Police, the Campaign launched Operation ABC to increase compliance with child passenger safety laws. During Buckle Up America Week, May 19-26, law enforcement in all 50 states will be conducting high visibility enforcement of and education on safety belt and child passenger safety laws. This type of activity is at the heart of the President's Plan.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, out of 1.4 million air bag deployments to date, over 1,800 lives have been saved. Tragically, twenty-four adults and 38 children have been killed. Investigations indicate that all but four of the children were either improperly buckled or not buckled up at all. Of the adults who died, most were not buckled up or were sitting too close to the air bag when it deployed.

Increased seat belt use will save people's lives, whether they are riding in vehicles with or without air bags. If every child were properly restrained, 53,000 injuries and 500 children's death would be prevented each year. If all passenger vehicle

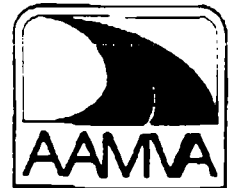
occupants over age four had buckled up, 18,704 lives could have been saved in 1994 alone.

According to new research commissioned by the Campaign and completed in March, 70% of Americans surveyed favor stronger laws requiring children to be properly restrained in child safety seats or safety belts approved for their age and size. Also, 2 out of 3 polled said they supported high visibility law enforcement — like increased patrols, checkpoints and other activities planned across the country for *Operation ABC*.

At no other point in time have we seen so much support at every level — the President, Governors, Mayors, law enforcement and the American people — for protecting children in motor vehicles. The Air Bag Safety Campaign, which includes businesses, health professionals, child health and safety organizations across the country, is working hard to save lives and to make unbuckled children unacceptable in America. While the challenge is great, the message is simple — Air bag safety means: Buckle Everyone! Children in Back.

The Air Bag Safety Campaign is a two-year intensive education and action campaign by a public/private partnership of automotive manufacturers, insurance companies, occupant restraints manufacturers, government agencies, health professionals, and child health and safety organizations. The goal of the Campaign is to increase the proper use of safety belts and child safety seats and to inform the public about how to maximize the lifesaving capabilities of air bags while minimizing the risks.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATORS



JOHN H. STRANDQUIST, CAE
President & CEO

FREDRICK D. PORTER, Chairman of the Board
Administrator, Office of Motor Vehicles
Arkansas

April 15, 1997

Honorable Rodney E. Slater
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Slater:

The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administration (AAMVA) is pleased to support President Clinton's proposed plan to increase the use of passenger seat belts nationwide. AAMVA has recognized for some time that motor vehicle-related trauma is a major public health and safety problem in this country and one that could be drastically reduced by the full-time use of passenger seat belts and child restraint seats.

AAMVA will do its part to assist states to increase seat belt use by providing model legislation that will help state legislatures enact laws for primary (standard) seat belt enforcement and to strengthen child safety seat laws. The effectiveness of occupant restraints in reducing deaths, serious injuries and monetary loss has been proven and is widely recognized. If used correctly and consistently, seat belts will save thousands of lives and prevent needless, serious injuries.

The Association believes the four point plan proposed in the National Strategy to Increase Seat Belt Use will go a long way to increase seat belt use in this country. We applaud your efforts.

Sincerely,

John H. Strandquist, CAE
President & CEO

**AMERICAN
COALITION FOR
TRAFFIC
SAFETY, INC.**

1110 N. Glebe Road
Suite 1020
Arlington, VA 22201
Tel. (703) 243-7501
Fax (703) 243-2806

**NEWS
RELEASE****FOR RELEASE APRIL 16, 1997**

**Contact: Betsy White
(703) 243-7501**

**Statement by ACTS President Phil Haseltine in Response to
Presidential Initiative to Increase Safety Belt Use**

The President has given the American people a marvelous opportunity to save lives and reduce costs to the taxpayer by announcing bold safety belt use targets and presenting a comprehensive plan to meet those targets. These are ambitious targets which can be met if the major components of the plan are implemented.

The challenge will be getting Americans to develop a new attitude towards using safety belts and treating belt use laws the same as laws for other minor traffic offenses. This means law enforcement officers being able to stop motorists for not buckling up, with fines and driver license penalty points for violators the same as those for offenses like running a red light.

Experience in the U.S., along with that in Australia and Canada, shows conclusively that the President's 90 percent target can only be reached if belt use laws are treated in the same manner as other traffic offenses. Focusing on limited approaches like standard (primary) enforcement laws and intense enforcement of existing weak statutes will not be enough to get the job done.

Safety belt use is currently 93 percent in Canada and 95 percent in Australia. Both Canada and the European Economic Community have adopted 95 percent safety belt use objectives.



**Automotive Occupant Restraints Council**

Administrative Office
3347 Tappan Creek Road
Louisiana, Kentucky 40502
(502) 268-0340
FAX: (502) 268-0341

March 14, 1997

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Automotive Occupant Restraints Council (AORC), which represents the manufacturers of automobile safety restraints systems and their components, applaud your plan to increase the use of safety belts in the U. S., as a means of reducing the great toll taken by traffic accidents and, especially, as a means of protecting child passengers. We support you in your commitment to raise seat belt usage nationwide to 85% by the year 2000, through adoption of primary seat-belt laws and stronger enforcement of existing use laws.

As a participating member of the Air Bag Safety Campaign, our organization is committed to reducing death and injury attributable to motor vehicle crashes. We support the Campaign's comprehensive strategy to increase the proper use of safety belts and child safety seats through public education, through the strengthening of seat belt and child passenger laws and through high visibility enforcement of these lifesaving laws. This effort is critical to protect children, not merely from the potential risks of air bags, but also from all crash-related injuries, which pose the greatest threat to improperly restrained passengers.

We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for your leadership on this vital program, and pledge the support of our organization, and its members, in achieving your goal.

Sincerely yours,

Charles H. Pulley,
President

CHP/jm

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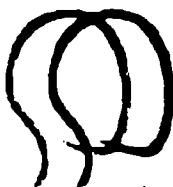
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FOUNDER

Marilyn Price Spivack

Brain Injury
Association, Inc.



The National Organization Serving People with Brain Injury - Promoting Prevention

1776 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.
Suite 100
Washington, DC 20036-1904
(202) 296-6443 - Fax: (202) 296-8850
<http://www.biausa.org>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Sue Guzman
202-296-6443

BRAIN INJURY ASSOCIATION PLEDGES SUPPORT
OF CLINTON ADMINISTRATION PLAN
TO INCREASE NATIONAL SEAT BELT USE TO 85%
— BIA Joins Other Members of the Airbag Safety Campaign
in Offering Cooperation —

(Washington, DC, April 16, 1997) . . . The Brain Injury Association (BIA) is pleased to publicly express its support for the Clinton administration's aggressive plan to increase seat belt use in the United States. As the leading cause of death and disability among Americans under the age of 45, brain injury is primarily caused by motor vehicle-related incidents. The use of seat belts is a proven, documented method of brain injury prevention — recent studies indicate that they are 57% effective in preventing fatal and traumatic brain injuries.

For the past 18 months, BIA has been working under the auspices of a cooperative agreement with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to implement a nationwide initiative entitled Campaign Safe & Sober. Designed to increase safety belt use and decrease impaired driving, the success of Campaign Safe & Sober relies upon multiple facets of the community partnering harmoniously towards the common goal of saving lives and stemming the tide of disability proliferation. By empowering law enforcement officials with primary seat belt laws and responding to the concerns of constituencies, legislators become a valuable component in this community partnership mentality.

Through its efforts with NHTSA's Campaign Safe & Sober, BIA commits to be an active organizational participant in the Clinton administration's efforts to spearhead community alliances on the issue of safety belt use.



World Health Organization Collaborating Centre on Brain Injury Prevention and Management

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216 Higgins Road
Park Ridge, IL 60068-5736
Telephone-847/698-9400
Fax-847/698-9406

ENA SUPPORTS PRESIDENT'S PLAN TO INCREASE NATIONAL SEAT BELT USE

The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) applauds the President's plan to increase the use of seat belts in the U.S. As emergency nurses, we see every day, an endless conveyor of needless human suffering directly related to the nonuse of seat belts and child safety seats. Motor vehicle injuries and deaths are not the result of "accidents." They are the result of contributing factors such as seat belt use, that make injury and death both predictable and avoidable.

Public education and standard enforcement of seat belt laws have a significant effect on reduction of traffic-related injury, and ENA pledges to lend our full support publicly and organizationally to both elected officials and law enforcement officials who work to increase seat belt use. As a result of this effort, we know that there will be a lot of adults and children that emergency nurses will never have to see. We are grateful to President Clinton for the opportunity to keep American families healthy, safe, and out of the Emergency Department.



STATEMENT

Contact: Bill Day
202-962-5366

Terry Bresnahan
313-337-2456

FOR USE ON INQUIRY**Statement by Ford Motor Company on the Administration's plan to increase safety belt use:**

Ford Motor Company and the Children's Television Workshop, producer of Sesame Street, applaud the President for his leadership in initiating this campaign to increase safety belt use. Big Bird will be telling youngsters and their parents to "buckle up for safety" in the months ahead.

Wearing safety belts is the single most effective way to protect vehicle occupants and to save lives on our highways. Ford believes that the responsibility to increase safety for the driving public is shared. Ford provides cars and trucks with state-of-the-art safety features, including driver and passenger restraint systems using safety belts and air bags. States enact and enforce safety belt-use laws that will achieve real results. Drivers and all passengers should — for their optimum safety — always buckle up and have children age 12 and under seated in the rear seat, properly restrained for their size and age.

The Administration's plan, we believe, correctly emphasizes incentives for states to take action to increase safety belt usage among Americans.

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4/16/97





GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION
 1660 I Street, N.W., Suite 402, Washington, D.C. 20036

NEWS

April 16, 1997

**GENERAL MOTORS STATEMENT ATTRIBUTABLE TO GM VICE CHAIRMAN
 HARRY J. PEARCE REGARDING PRESIDENT CLINTON'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON
 INCREASING SAFETY BELT USE IN THE U.S.**

We applaud the President for his initiative and national commitment to achieving world-class levels of safety belt use in the U.S.

This comprehensive plan, calling for action by many segments of U.S. society, is one of the most important initiatives that the public and private sectors can take over the next few years, as it will help to prevent thousands of fatalities and injuries in highway crashes. One of General Motors highest priorities in supporting the President's plan will be to work diligently for 100 percent safety belt use by our employees.

General Motors pledges our support and stands prepared to work with the President, Congress, the Department of Transportation, State governments and all other interested parties to implement this program to increase safety belt use throughout the country.

#

Contact: Randy Fox (202) 775-5040

Post-It® Fax Note	7571	Date	# of pages 1
To Jim Hedlund	From J. O. T. 05/16		
Co./Dept.	Co.		
Phone #	Phone #		
Fax #	Fax #		

HONDA

HONDA NORTH AMERICA, INC.955 L'ENFANT PLAZA, S.W., SUITE 5300
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20024 (202) 554-1650

January 31, 1997

The Honorable William J. Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

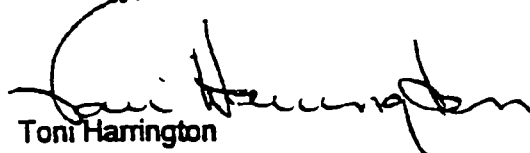
On behalf of Honda, we applaud your efforts to increase safety belt usage nationwide and thank you for your leadership in this most important effort. As an active member of the Air Bag Safety Campaign, Honda is working with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to develop a plan which will focus on the passage of stronger state safety belt usage laws and a sustained commitment to enforcement.

Recent polling and opinion surveys have shown the general public would support a higher visibility effort to enforce seat belt use laws, particularly to save the lives of children. As you may be aware, virtually every child killed by an air bag has been either unrestrained or improperly restrained. Every segment of society must do its part to ensure all children are properly secured when riding in a motor vehicle. The enactment of more effective statutes and a comprehensive enforcement effort must be our highest priorities.

As a first step, we urge your Administration to call upon Governors, Mayors and law enforcement officials to make child passenger safety law enforcement its highest priority at the state and local level. Monies are already made available to states from the Department of Transportation for enforcement of seat belt laws.

Again, we thank you for your commitment to this important safety issue and look forward to working with you and your Administration in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Toni Harrington
Assistant Vice President

cc: Governor George Voinovich
Governor Pete Wilson
Transportation Secretary-Designate Rodney Slater
NHTSA Administrator Ricardo Martinez
Janet Dewey

NCADD

Coming Together Against Drunk Driving

February 10, 1997

▲
Robert C. Stempel
Chairman
Board of Directors

▲
James S. Kemper, Jr.
Chairman
Board of Trustees

▲
Terrance D. Schiavone
President

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

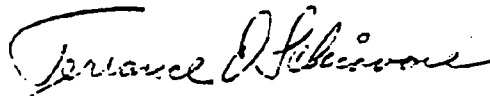
As an organization that supports all safe driving behaviors, the National Commission Against Drunk Driving applauds your memorandum to the Secretary of Transportation calling for increased seatbelt usage nationwide. While we explore every available resource to reduce the incidence of drunk driving in this country, we are mindful that a safety belt is the first line of defense when an alcohol-related crash does occur.

We continue to believe that public awareness can and will boost seatbelt use. This educational outreach should, however, be combined with other strategies. In particular, we believe a lifesaving change in motorist behavior can occur if safety belt compliance becomes a law enforcement priority. If officers can incorporate enforcement of primary and secondary seatbelt laws into their normal vehicle stops, this would raise motorist awareness and compliance, saving thousands of lives each year.

NCADD is taking a very targeted approach in identifying and removing drunk drivers from our roads and highways. Until we accomplish that goal, safety belts remain the most vital anti-drunk driving tool available to the safe and sober driver.

We stand ready to assist you and the Secretary in this very worthwhile mission.

Sincerely,



Terrance D. Schiavone
President

cc: Secretary of Transportation
NHTSA Administrator



1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
 Suite 1000
 Washington, D.C. 20004-1707
 (202) 662-0600
 (202) 393-2072 Fax

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STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL SAFE KIDS CAMPAIGN

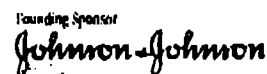
APRIL 15, 1997

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign applauds President Clinton for working to increase safety belt use among families nationwide. The President's plan will help decrease the number one cause of unintentional injury-related death among children -- motor vehicle crashes.

"Child safety seats and safety belts save lives. Unfortunately, too many people either don't use them or use them incorrectly. The initiative being announced today zeros in on a proven means for getting people to buckle up -- strong occupant protection laws," said Heather Paul, Ph.D., Executive Director of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign. "With the increasing number of motor vehicle-related crashes and today's higher speed limits, it's important for us all to take responsibility for buckling up and protecting child passengers on every ride."

The National SAFE KIDS Campaign is the first and only organization dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injury -- the number one killer of children ages 14 and under. More than 200 State and Local SAFE KIDS Coalitions in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico comprise the Campaign. Former U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, M.D. is Chairman of the Campaign and Vice President Al Gore and Tipper Gore are Honorary Chairs.

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**National
Safety
Council**

Gerard F. Scannell
President

April 15, 1997

The Honorable William J. Clinton
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The National Safety Council commends you for your leadership in calling for a national plan to increase safety belt and proper child safety seat use. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading threat faced by America's families, and increasing safety belt usage is critical to reducing this risk. The United States ranks well behind other developed countries in this important area. Canada has achieved a national belt use rate of 93%, Australia 92%, Britain 95%, and Germany 97%. They do that by having good laws well enforced, as is called for in your plan.

As part of the Air Bag Safety Campaign, we look forward to working with you in making this plan successful by mobilizing the public health, corporate and citizen groups across this country. We strongly believe that your goals are achievable, and we look forward to working with you toward that end.

Sincerely,

Gerard F. Scannell

1121 Spring Lake Drive
Itasca, IL 60143-3201
630-285-1121
630-285-1316 Fax
scannell@nsc.org

A nongovernmental,
not-for-profit, international
public service organization.



NATIONWIDE INSURANCE ENTERPRISE

HOME OFFICE: ONE NATIONWIDE PLAZA, COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215-2220

DIMON RICHARD McPHERSON, CLU
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

TELEPHONE 614/240-4637
FAX 614/240-0771

April 15, 1997

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Clinton:

The goals set by your administration to put a new and national focus on raising seat belt and child safety seat usage are commendable, bold and essential to meet the urgent need for improved occupant protection in the United States. Our new national goals for restraint use are ambitious, but reachable with strong coordinated leadership from the top and an aggressive dedication to expend resources only on methods already proven effective.

Your plan sets forth proven means to accomplish the new national goals with one shortcoming. These life saving goals will not be easily accomplished. In order to reach them, the proposed partnerships between government and the private sector need focus and coordination. I am concerned by what appears to be an unfounded reliance on an unstructured and unguided confederacy of partnerships.

In an era where business and government are driven to do more with less, we can ill afford to have the precious resources that might be directed to reach these worthwhile goals expended in repeating the mistakes of the past or trying new unproved methods. If the past has shown us anything, it is that not everything that "feels good," works.

What works are:

- 1) Good, strong (standard enforcement) seat belt and child safety seat laws,
- 2) Active, periodic, multiple-agency (state, county, and local police) enforcement of occupant protection laws accompanied by
- 3) Coordinated media campaigns directed at informing the public that the laws are being actively enforced, and publicly supporting those charged with traffic law enforcement.

I am concerned that without strong leadership in building and guiding the public/private partners to focus their resource expenditures on these three methods, valuable and scarce resources will likely be spent without effect on the national goals. If the plan urges everyone's participation, even with specific recommended actions, but without a specific structure to plan, coordinate, and give direction, then "everyone" is responsible. This equates to "no one" is accountable.

We have seen successes like those you seek in North Carolina's "Click It or Ticket" campaign. It produced, in a matter of months and has maintained for years, scientifically documented increases in restraint usage and reductions in deaths and serious injuries at the level of your proposed first goals.

To achieve these new national goals, to formulate and coordinate the needed partnerships, I commend to your attention and that of Secretary Slater, the accomplishments of the Air Bag Safety Campaign launched by then Secretary Peña with Dr. Ricardo Martinez as honorary chair. This very effective and successful partnership could even be redirected to become an Occupant Protection Campaign.

Please give strong leadership to the needed partnership of governments and the private sector. With this addition to the plan, our significant new national goals are attainable.

Sincerely,



DRM/mjl

C: Honorable Rodney Slater
Honorable Ricardo Martinez, MD

For Release**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Chrysler Corporation
CIMS 485-06-48
1000 Chrysler Drive
Auburn Hills, MI 48326-2766

Contact: Chris Preuss (202) 414-6709
Jason Vines (810) 512-2704

CHRYSLER STATEMENT ON WHITE HOUSE SEAT BELT ANNOUNCEMENT

Chrysler applauds the action taken today by President Clinton which puts the full force of the White House behind a comprehensive seat belt usage program.

Without question, seat belts are the most effective occupant protection devices available in vehicles today and Chrysler supports efforts to dramatically increase compliance with mandatory seat belt usage laws.

Chrysler will continue to work with Federal, state and local governments to see that the goal of 85 percent seat belt usage is reached by 2000.

#



STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

PARRIS N. GLENDENING
GOVERNOR

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April 16, 1997

The Honorable William J. Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for inviting me to participate in the announcement of the Occupant Protection Incentive Grant Program. While I regret that I am unable to attend this event because of a prior commitment in Maryland, I strongly support this important safety component of your Administration's proposal for reauthorization of the nation's surface transportation program.

Several weeks ago, I was involved in an automobile accident near my home. Fortunately, I was wearing my seat belt at the time of the collision and was not seriously injured. I know that wearing my seat belt properly made it possible for me to safely walk away from that accident. I am confident that your Occupant Protection Program will help to reduce highway deaths and injuries that result when people ride without seat belts in motor vehicles. The incentive awards you propose will encourage states to make positive changes to obtain much needed safety funds while simultaneously improving safety standards across the nation.

As Governor, I am gratified that Maryland's General Assembly session passed a primary enforcement seat belt law during the recently completed legislative session. When I sign this legislation into law in a few weeks, Maryland will become one of the first states in the nation to comply with all five of the Basic Grant A criteria specified in your Administration's proposal.

By changing our seat belt enforcement from secondary to primary, we conservatively estimate that we will save dozens of lives and prevent thousands of injuries each year. As a result, Maryland citizens will save \$138 million in health care, worker's compensation and other insurance expenses. While we may know the names of people who are tragically killed in automobile accidents, we will never know the names of those Marylanders whose lives will be saved because of your Occupant Protection Program and the primary enforcement seat belt legislation that was passed in our State legislature this year.

The Honorable William J. Clinton
April 16, 1997
Page 2 of 2

On behalf of all Marylanders, I commend you for your leadership in moving this vital public safety initiative forward. We look forward to working with you and Transportation Secretary Rodney Slater as we continue our efforts to reauthorize the nation's surface transportation program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Parris N. Glendening". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "G" at the end.

Parris N. Glendening
Governor



NEWS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of the Secretary

Contact: Mary Helen Thompson
(202) 208-6416

For immediate release:
April 16, 1997

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES SEAT BELT SAFETY EFFORTS

President's initiative on seat belt safety will be
a priority for National Parks

Interior Department announced today a plan to increase seat belt safety in National Parks, Indian Reservations and other federal areas. The effort is part of a government wide initiative by President Clinton to increase seat belt use and reduce injuries and fatalities from traffic accidents.

The Executive Order signed by President Clinton today, states that the Federal government will require that federal employees use seat belts while on official business and will require that motor vehicle occupants use seat belts while in National Park areas. All agencies of the executive branch are directed to work with the Department of Transportation to develop rules and take other appropriate measures to implement the order.

The Interior Department will:

- o adopt and actively enforce seat belt use policies in all national parks.
- o provide information annually to the Department of Transportation on seat belt use rates and statistics of crashes, injuries and related costs involving occupants of motor vehicles driven in national parks.
- o encourage Tribal governments to adopt and actively enforce mandatory seat belt and child safety seat use laws.
- o implement and expand seat belt and child safety seat education programs and training on Tribal lands.

"The goals of the presidential initiative are to address the enormous human and economic costs of traffic related injuries and fatalities in the United States," Secretary Babbitt stated. "We plan to do our part to encourage seat belt usage and insure safe driving in our National Parks and other Interior managed areas."

DOI

Presidential Initiative for Increasing Seat Belt Use Nationwide Recommendations from the Secretary of Transportation

President Clinton's Directive

In a weekly radio address to the nation on December 28, 1996, President Clinton asked all Americans to always wear seat belts as a first line of defense against traffic injuries and fatalities and always to keep children, ages 12 and under, buckled in the back seat where they are safest. On January 23, 1997, the President directed the Secretary of Transportation to prepare a plan to increase the use of seat belts nationwide.

The President directed the Secretary to work with Congress, the states, and other concerned Americans, including the automobile and insurance industries and safety and consumer groups, to develop the plan. He further directed that the plan address: 1) state laws that require the use of seat belts; 2) assistance from the Department of Transportation to improve these state laws; and 3) a comprehensive education campaign on behalf of the public and private sectors to help the public understand the need to wear seat belts.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), as the lead agency in developing the plan, met with and solicited input from Congress, other Federal agencies, the states, the private sector, including automobile manufacturers and insurers, and many other groups and organizations. The plan presented here is based on their advice and on a solid foundation of research and practical experience with strategies to increase seat belt use.

Background

Crashes Aren't Accidents

The vast majority of all fatal and non-fatal injuries in America are not acts of fate but are predictable and preventable. Injuries are a major health care problem and are the leading cause of death for persons ages 1 to 42. Fatalities, however, are only a small part of the total injury picture. For each injury-related death, there are 19 hospitalizations for injury and over 300 injuries that require medical attention. Every year, one in four Americans will have a potentially preventable injury serious enough to require medical care. These injuries account for almost 10 percent of all physician office visits and 38 percent of all emergency department visits. Injury patterns vary by age group, gender, and cultural group. There are also seasonal and geographic patterns to injury. Injuries pose a significant drain on the health care system, incurring huge treatment, acute care, and rehabilitation costs.

Traffic injuries are the leading cause of injury deaths and the leading cause of all deaths for people ages 6 to 27. Each year, traffic injuries in America produce \$150.5 billion in economic costs, including \$17 billion in medical care. Traffic injuries are the principal cause of on-the-job fatalities and the third largest cause of all deaths in the United States; only heart attacks and cancer kill more people. However, far more people are injured and survive motor vehicle crashes than die in these crashes. In 1995, for example, while almost 41,800 persons were killed in traffic crashes, over 3.4 million were injured in police-reported crashes. These injured persons often

require medical care and many require long-term care. For children, the problem is equally dramatic; motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 6 to 14. In 1995, the 0-14 age group accounted for 7 percent (2,794) of all traffic fatalities.

Traffic crashes aren't "accidents." They are both predictable and preventable. And the quickest, easiest, and most effective way to prevent traffic injuries and fatalities is to make certain that every vehicle occupant is properly buckled up on every trip.

It's Everyone's Problem

The motor vehicle injury problem affects all Americans. Although personal pain and suffering, loss of a loved one, and dealing with the impact of a seriously injured family member cannot be measured, these factors cannot be overlooked. Individuals also bear the economic costs of motor vehicle crashes -- on average, \$580 a year for every person in America. When someone is involved in a motor vehicle crash, everyone bears the costs of the emergency response providers, higher medical and insurance costs, and lost productivity. When individuals don't wear seat belts, costs increase considerably.

Because government at all levels pays some of the costs of traffic injuries, government at all levels has the responsibility to reduce traffic injuries and costs. Publicly-funded health programs and other public services, such as law enforcement and emergency medical services, are greatly impacted whenever someone is injured in a motor vehicle crash. For instance, according to a 1996 NHTSA study of 10 states, 24 percent of inpatient hospital costs are paid by Medicare, Medicaid, and other government sources. When a problem of this magnitude exists, government must take action to keep these crash-related costs under control. NHTSA estimates that if seat belt usage rates for front seat passengers (in automobiles and light trucks) were to increase from the present 68 percent to 85 percent, Medicare and Medicaid would save \$275 million a year (in 1996 dollars). With a 90 percent use rate, the savings would be \$356 million a year!

Business incurs enormous costs from traffic crashes through lost productivity and higher insurance and medical costs. On-the-job crashes cost employers almost \$22,000 per crash and \$110,000 per injury. Traffic crashes on- and off-the-job cost American business an estimated \$55 billion in 1994. It pays for business to participate in solving this problem on behalf of its employees, for those who consume its products and services, and for its own bottom line.

The health care industry shares in the economic burden produced by traffic injuries. Many health care costs of traffic injuries are either not reimbursed or are paid with taxpayer dollars. On average, hospital charges for an unbelted driver admitted as an inpatient exceed the inpatient hospital charges of a belted driver by \$5,000.

Insurance premiums reflect part of the problem. When a person is injured in a motor vehicle crash, someone pays -- private insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, the injured person, or the victim's family. When the person is not properly restrained, everybody pays more. Insurance companies

frequently assume the financial burden of injuries requiring long term treatment and care and pass the costs on to customers as higher premiums. If an insurance company is not involved, or if the coverage is insufficient, eventually some treatment costs are paid with taxpayer dollars.

Preventing needless injuries and deaths requires a commitment to traffic safety at all levels of government -- local, state¹, and Federal. It also requires the support of partners in private industry, citizen groups, and nonprofit organizations. Most important, this problem requires individuals to take personal responsibility for their own and their family's safety by making certain that everyone is properly buckled up, every time, on every trip.

America's Experience with Seat Belt and Child Seat Use

Seat belts work. They are the most effective means of reducing fatalities and serious injuries when traffic crashes occur. They are estimated to save 9,500 lives in America each year. Research has found that lap/shoulder belts, when used properly, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. For light truck occupants, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60 percent and moderate-to-critical injury by 65 percent.

Every 14 seconds, someone in America is injured in a traffic crash. Every 12 minutes, someone is killed in a crash. Often, when a traffic crash happens, the victim doesn't see the incident coming until it's too late. At the moment of impact, unbelted occupants are still traveling at the vehicle's original speed. Just after the vehicle comes to a complete stop, unbelted occupants will slam into the steering wheel, windshield, or other parts of the vehicle's interior. Seat belts are effective in reducing fatalities and injuries caused by the second collision, or "human collision," when the vehicle's occupants hit some part of the vehicle interior or other occupants. Seat belts also provide the greatest protection against occupant ejection. In fatal crashes in 1995, only 2 percent of restrained passenger car occupants were ejected, compared to 25 percent of unrestrained occupants. Ejection from the vehicle is one of the most injurious events that can happen to a person in a crash. Three-quarters of the occupants who are ejected from passenger cars are killed.

While the first seat belts were installed by automobile manufacturers in the 1950s, seat belt use was very low -- only 10-15 percent nationwide -- until the early 1980s. From 1984 through 1987, belt use increased from 14 percent to 42 percent as a result of the passage of seat belt use laws in 31 states. Then, from 1990 through 1992, belt use increased from 49 percent to 62 percent as a result of a national effort of highly visible enforcement and public education.

Since then, belt use has risen slowly and some states have struggled to maintain seat belt use at

¹References in this report to "states" apply to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Indian Nations, and the United States Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

current levels. In 1996, belt use nationwide was 68 percent, and ranged across the states from a high of 87 percent in California, to a low of 43 percent in North Dakota. Currently, 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and all the U.S. Territories have seat belt laws. New Hampshire is the only exception. (New Hampshire requires seat belt use up to age 12.) In 38 states, the law provides only for "secondary" enforcement of seat belt violations, requiring an officer to stop a violator for another infraction before issuing a citation for failure to buckle up. Under primary enforcement, a citation can be written whenever a law enforcement officer observes an unbelted driver or passenger. Currently, 11 states, the U.S. Territories, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, have primary (or "standard") enforcement laws. Maryland recently passed a primary seat belt enforcement law that goes into effect October 1, 1997. California, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia had secondary enforcement laws, but upgraded their laws to primary enforcement. No state, except the District of Columbia, has a seat belt use law that assesses driver license penalty points. The District of Columbia's new law, after a six-month grace period to educate the public, authorizes the assessment of two penalty points and a \$50 fine for a seat belt use violation. The District's new law covers all seating positions.

Seat belt use in the 11 states with primary (standard) seat belt use laws currently averages about 15 percentage points higher than in states with secondary laws. California and Louisiana increased their seat belt use rate by 13 and 18 percentage points, respectively, by upgrading their secondary laws to primary. Early reports from Georgia suggest that similar gains will be achieved. Georgia had a use rate of 53 percent near the end of 1995, which fell to 51 percent shortly before the change to primary enforcement on July 1, 1996. After four months of primary enforcement (and despite the media's and law enforcement's attention on the Olympics during that period), statewide use was observed at 62 percent.

To understand why seat belt use is not higher, it is important to understand who does not use seat belts. Americans can be classified as *non-users*, *part-time users*, and *full-time users*.

Non-users represent only 5 to 10 percent of the population, but are the most difficult to convert to seat belt use. High risk drivers are most typically *non-users* of seat belts. They are more likely than others to drive after drinking, to be involved in a serious crash, and are also the least likely to be responsible for the social and economic consequences of their behavior. These are the drivers who would benefit most from using their seat belts. They often appear to believe that seat belts can cause more harm than good or that government should not mandate behaviors that affect only them. Non-users come from all segments of society but are frequently male, less than 30 years of age, unmarried, and have little or no post-secondary education. They often drive pickup trucks or sport utility vehicles and live in rural areas.

Part-time users are often people who believe that seat belts reduce the severity of injury in motor vehicle crashes but who also believe that they are not at risk when driving on short, familiar, low speed trips. Many part-time users think of themselves as full-time users because they wear their belts when they believe they are at risk of crash involvement. The greatest gains in seat belt use

have been achieved by increasing the number of situations in which part-time users wear their seat belts. Since members of this group already believe that seat belts are beneficial, they may be converted to full-time users through education, but messages must be presented in new ways so part-time users will pay attention.

Almost three-quarters of Americans say they are *full-time* users. However, of these, almost 10 percent acknowledge that they did not use their seat belts at least once during the past week. In NHTSA surveys, full-time users say their primary reason for wearing seat belts is to avoid injury. (Part-time users also state this as their number one reason to buckle up.) Studies have shown that self-reported seat belt use is 12 to 25 percentage points higher than observed use. In NHTSA observational surveys, the female use rate is 10 percentage points higher than the male use rate. Overall seat belt use rates are highest in the suburbs, followed by cities, then rural areas.

A barrier to increasing seat belt use is that many state and local leaders do not understand the linkage of seat belt use to social burdens. The combined costs to government, health care systems, business, and individuals make this a community issue that cannot be ignored or underestimated. The failure to recognize that seat belt use reduces deaths, injuries, and costs has resulted in the adoption of secondary belt laws in many states. These laws often are not enforced vigorously.

Child safety seats work. Children, especially those under the age of 5, are vulnerable in collisions because of the size and shape of their bodies. The child safety seat is designed to spread the forces of a crash over more of the body for front-facing toddlers, and cradles the fragile neck and back of the rear-facing infant.

Child safety seats are the most effective occupant protection devices used in motor vehicles today. If used correctly, they are 71 percent effective in reducing fatalities in children under the age of 5 and 69 percent effective in reducing the need for hospitalization. Unfortunately, parents and other care givers too often consider child seats inconvenient, out of their financial reach, or too difficult to install. Others are uninformed or misinformed about correct child safety seat use. About 50 percent of children under 5 who died in crashes were unrestrained. Of the remaining 50 percent, 26 percent were in an adult seat belt which does not provide effective protection for most children under age 5. Others were in a child restraint system, but had not been restrained properly. In studies conducted by NHTSA to observe child safety seat misuse, nearly 80 percent of the child seats observed were misused in one or more ways. In some cases, the seat was not properly attached to the vehicle; in others, the child was not appropriately buckled into the seat.

Seat belts and child safety seats work. Yet, fewer than 40 percent of both adults and children who died in traffic crashes were properly restrained.

Seat Belt and Child Safety Seat Use Outside the United States

Many other countries have seat belt use rates significantly higher than the United States. For

example, use rates in Canada, Australia, and several Western European countries exceed 90 percent, while use rates in Great Britain exceed 80 percent. Seat belt use laws in these countries typically allow primary (standard) enforcement and also cover occupants of light trucks and vans in addition to automobiles. Fines for noncompliance are generally higher than in the United States, and some jurisdictions assess demerit points against driver's licenses for seat belt use law violations. In contrast, except for the District of Columbia, states in the U.S. do not assess penalty points for adult seat belt use violations.

In Europe, some countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) have laws that permit child passengers in the front seat provided they are in a child safety seat or seat belt. This approach is typical of state laws in the U.S. Other European countries (Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Spain) have child passenger safety laws that require children up to a specified age and weight to ride in the rear seat. However, some of these countries have exemptions to these laws that permit children to ride in front passenger seating positions provided they are in a child safety seat or seat belt. Foreign child passenger safety laws are often "nationwide" as opposed to state-by-state as they are in the U.S.

Belt use rates in Canada and the U.S. did not differ markedly until the mid-1980s, when Canadian provinces began implementing comprehensive special traffic enforcement programs (STEPS). These highly publicized enforcement efforts achieved belt use rates in the 80 percent range. When Canada decided to establish a national 95 percent seat belt use goal, provinces amended their laws to add driver license penalty points. With these penalty point provisions, seat belt use in Canada has risen to 92 percent for drivers and 90 percent for front seat passengers.

Taking Responsibility

It's Easy to Increase Seat Belt Use -- All It Takes Is Everyone

Click! Buckle up. It's easy and it takes three seconds. Once a person establishes the habit of wearing seat belts on every trip, it's usually a habit for life. And examples from businesses, local communities, states, and many other countries show that seat belt use can be increased in America.

Just as the problem of low seat belt use rates belongs to everyone in America, so does the solution. Everyone must buckle up properly, on every trip. Only through the cooperation of all levels of government (Federal, state, and local), the private sector, interest groups, citizen activists, other interested parties, and individuals, can the nation begin to reach its goal. Through collective partnerships, individuals *can* be educated and encouraged to change behavior and assume personal responsibility for themselves and their families.

In this partnership, the Federal Government has a role to play. It can develop the "tools" for this collective effort, help establish new partnerships, provide formula and incentive grants, give

hands-on assistance when requested, and furnish examples of model programs that work and can be replicated nationwide.

Many states, communities, and organizations have helped raise seat belt and child safety seat use substantially. Their successful methods can be shared and duplicated. Below are some examples of "best practices":

- North Carolina's multi-partnered "Click It or Ticket" provides an excellent example. North Carolina began this highly visible enforcement program in 1993, modeled on the successful Canadian STEPs. Seat belt use rose from 65 percent to 83 percent, one of the nation's highest use rates. In the first two years of "Click It or Ticket," fatal and serious injuries were reduced by 15 percent and taxpayers saved more than \$100 million in health care related costs. Nearly every law enforcement agency in the state participates in the program.
- The Navajo Nation Tribal Council passed a seat belt use law in 1988. Tribal enforcement and awareness activities began that year and expanded in 1992 with a Federal grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to establish a Community Traffic Safety Program to emphasize raising the tribe's seat belt use. The program combined community-wide education, school-based injury prevention, Safe Kids coalition programs, and a child safety seat loaner program. The program also provided for improved traffic records, defensive driver training, and an impaired driving task force. Navajo Police undertook aggressive enforcement of the tribe's primary (standard) occupant protection laws through routine patrols and highly publicized checkpoints. By the end of 1995, surveys showed that low belt use on the reservation (initially measured at 8 percent) soared to 78 percent for the Navajo people and there was a 50 percent drop in hospital admissions. Tribal employees operating government vehicles are now buckling up 100 percent of the time.
- The United Parcel Service (UPS) boasts a solid traffic safety record. With more than 84,000 drivers nationwide, UPS has a zero tolerance policy for unsafe driver behavior behind the wheel. As part of its defensive driving program, based on establishing good driver habits, UPS instructs its drivers that *if the wheels are in motion, the driver must be secured with a seat belt* -- even if the vehicle is moving just a few feet. Three decades ago, UPS made a conscious decision to install seat belts in its vehicles to protect its drivers. As a result of UPS' comprehensive driver training program, wearing seat belts has become a habit among UPS employees. Since the inception of UPS' commitment to seat belt usage and other safe driving habits, fatal injury and crash rates have declined steadily.

Everyone Can Participate

Everyone in America can participate in this national effort to save lives and prevent injuries by buckling up properly on every trip. While it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual to

buckle up and to ensure that all children in a motor vehicle are properly restrained, there is also a role for many groups and organizations, both public and private, to provide the tools that will help get non-users and part-time users into the healthy habit. The following lists examples of participants and the kinds of roles they can adopt:

President: As the nation's Chief Executive, the President can provide overall leadership for seat belt use and bring together leaders of the public and private sectors, media, national organizations, and others to concentrate their energy and resources toward a single goal and mission. The President can urge Congress to support and fund policies to advance seat belt use, energize new partners, and re-energize existing partners by setting the tone and supporting a national effort.

Congress: The Senate and House of Representatives can provide funding and establish programs that encourage states to adopt legislation and to educate the public on the importance of proper seat belt and child safety seat use.

DOT Secretary: The Secretary of Transportation can provide vision and administer overall seat belt and child safety seat programs; dedicate staff for program development, implementation, and evaluation; provide funding to states (under the Highway Safety Act of 1966, as amended, 23 U.S.C. §§ 402 and 403); promote public/private partnerships; and provide leadership to other Federal agencies.

Federal Agencies: Federal agencies can promote seat belt use with their employees and constituents.

States: States can build partnerships and develop strategies to pass and visibly enforce primary (standard) seat belt enforcement laws and comprehensive child passenger safety laws. States can support and coordinate effective seat belt and child safety seat public education.

National Organizations and Coalitions: Groups such as Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, Air Bag Safety Campaign, American College of Emergency Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Coalition for Traffic Safety, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives, National Governors' Association, Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, Parent Teacher Association, and others can provide valuable technical assistance and resources. They can build constituent efforts and partnerships, advocate strengthened laws and increased enforcement, and provide education at the state and local level.

Business: Many businesses already have made major contributions toward increasing seat belt use -- from local businesses to major international corporations. As a group, business is respected by Congress, state legislatures, community governments, and private citizens, and wields influence in determining legislative, economic, and commercial priorities. Business can promote the "healthy habit" through a wide variety of strategies and is an essential partner in collective efforts.

Media: The media and other public and private communication outlets have made the public aware of the dangers of not being properly restrained and can assist in changing behaviors. Recently, the media have reported heavily upon the several dozen persons killed by air bags to educate the public effectively about the potential dangers of these devices. The media can do the same in other areas to highlight the thousands of persons killed each year through failure to use seat belts and child safety seats, or to use them properly. The media can also help publicize state and local law enforcement efforts.

Sports Organizations and Athletes: Athletes from professional, college, school, and neighborhood sports teams can serve as role models and set examples by being seat belt wearers. Sports teams can promote seat belt use through a variety of venues, such as special activities, media events, arena programs, signs, and announcements.

Health Care Professionals: Doctors, nurses, and other medical, emergency, and health care professionals add their unique perspective to the problem. They can use their experience, knowledge, and professional reputations to educate Congress, state legislators, the media, patients, and the general public about the dangers of not buckling up and not using child restraints properly.

Prosecutors and Judges: The judicial system is an integral part of increasing seat belt and child safety seat use. The court system must support law enforcement officers who cite individuals for noncompliance of belt laws or who put their children at risk by not properly restraining them. As officers of the court, prosecutors and judges can send a firm message to the public that seat belt and child restraint laws are important.

Educators: Youth are both the problem, with very low seat belt use rates, and the solution. Proper seat belt use habits, if established when individuals are young, will likely last a lifetime. Educators can be effective in teaching and reinforcing seat belt use habits.

The National Goals

America must set ambitious seat belt and child safety seat use goals. We have an unprecedented opportunity to save lives, prevent injuries, reduce health care and other costs, and improve the lives of all Americans -- simply by increasing proper seat belt and child safety seat use. But to do this, we must be bold. We must reach beyond "business as usual." Bold goals will require commitment and cooperation from everyone living in the United States. But for the country's good, we cannot settle for less. America *can* do it.

- **Increase national seat belt use to 85% by 2000 and 90% by 2005**
(from 68% in 1996)
- **Reduce child occupant fatalities (0-4 years) by 15% in 2000 and by 25% in 2005**
(from a total of 685 in 1995)

Reaching these goals would result in significant reductions in deaths, injuries, and their economic costs to society. Increasing the seat belt use rate from the current 68 percent (1996) to 85 percent would prevent an estimated 4,194 fatalities and 102,518 injuries annually. This reduction in injuries and deaths would result in an economic savings of approximately \$6.7 billion annually (1996 dollars). Increasing the seat belt use rate from the current 68 percent to 90 percent would prevent an estimated 5,536 fatalities and 132,670 injuries annually, and would save \$8.8 billion annually.

The National Strategy

The National Strategy presents a collaborative, cooperative four point plan to achieve the ambitious national goals of increasing seat belt and child safety seat use. Individuals must take responsibility for themselves and for their child passengers by making certain everyone in the vehicle is properly buckled up -- every time and on every trip. It will, however, take the collective efforts of many people and many organizations to ensure that every person in America has the knowledge and tools to make the right choice and to take personal responsibility. The Strategy has a role for everyone and builds on the considerable activities, funding, and resources already committed by many different organizations to this common cause.

The Four Point Plan

The plan to increase seat belt use in America has four elements that, when implemented together, have proven to be effective in increasing seat belt use. The first element is the most important: We must join together to **build the public-private partnership** necessary to help America reach its potential to save lives and prevent injuries through the use of seat belts and child safety seats. In addition, each state must **enact strong legislation** and embrace **active, high visibility law enforcement**. Finally, all public and private partners must conduct well-coordinated, **effective public education**. These strategies work.

Point 1. To reach our goals, we will need to **build public-private partnerships** at the local, state, and federal levels. The problem is too big for any one group or coalition to tackle alone. No one of us is as effective as all of us are together. While it is the individual who must ultimately take responsibility to buckle up and safely secure all children riding in the vehicle, it is the responsibility of a great many to encourage, enact, enforce, and inform.

Driving is a privilege that comes with responsibilities. Through public-private partnerships, we can collectively address the seat belt non-use problem and establish a national attitude that wearing seat belts and using child safety seats is the expected behavior in America. Partnerships can coordinate and execute efforts that will weave the seat belt message into America's consciousness -- in the home, throughout hometowns, at school, in the workplace, on the road, at recreational sites, and in the media. Public and private sector organizations can join together to set the tone and serve as models who demonstrate that we are a nation that cares about children, families, good health, and well-being. By framing passenger protection as a health issue, public-private partnerships can reach millions of individuals with correct and helpful information, and encourage seat belt part-time and non-users to make the right decision and buckle up.

There are, and have been, many strong partnerships over the past 10 years that have worked to increase seat belt and child safety seat use in America. Many public and private organizations have contributed funding and in-kind resources and have worked together to achieve our Nation's current 68 percent seat belt use rate. In communities across the country, businesses have joined with service groups, law enforcement agencies, citizen activists, county engineers, schools, and others to increase local use rates. States have formed statewide seat belt coalitions, distributed information, passed and enforced laws, and developed strategies for increasing usage. Large businesses have taken on the issue because it is cost effective and it makes sense. Now it is time to energize existing partners and bring on new ones to assist in meeting the national goals. New ideas, new resources, additional energy, and additional partners are needed.

It will, however, take more than marketing a healthier lifestyle to get hard core seat belt non-wearers, and those who fail to secure their children properly in motor vehicles, to take responsibility. Additional strategies are needed.

Point 2. The second component of the National Strategy is for states to **enact strong legislation** by adopting primary (standard) seat belt laws and closing gaps in child passenger safety laws. Under primary enforcement laws, a citation can be written whenever a law enforcement officer observes an unbelted driver or passenger. In states with secondary laws, an officer can issue a citation only after the driver is stopped or cited for some other infraction. Child passenger safety laws should cover every child (up to age 16), in every seating position, in every passenger vehicle. Currently, although every state has a child passenger safety law, some laws include only very young children, some cover only the front seat, and some exempt pickup trucks and vans.

Point 3. The National Strategy's third component is to **conduct active, high-visibility enforcement** of seat belt laws is necessary to achieve higher seat belt use rates. Experience has

shown that, after seat belt laws pass, use rates rise because of the public's perception that they must buckle up. However, if the laws are not actively enforced, use rates drop. Seat belt use laws need to be enforced in the same way that other traffic infractions are, like speeding or running a red light.

An additional benefit of increased traffic enforcement, in addition to saving lives and dollars, is a measurable reduction in crime. Active, highly visible traffic enforcement provides a major opportunity to catch criminals. Because most criminals drive to and from crime scenes, it is not surprising that as many as one-third of criminal apprehensions occur as part of traffic stops. Nor is it surprising that high intensity law enforcement programs, such as those conducted in North Carolina and Tennessee, result in a large number of criminal apprehensions and recoveries of stolen property.

A variety of seat belt enforcement approaches are encouraged to fit a community's needs. Examples including ticketing, conducting checkpoints, safety checks, child safety seat clinics, and officers serving as role models by wearing their own seat belts. Active enforcement is a must. In addition, law enforcement must take every opportunity to educate the public about the importance of seat belts, child safety seats, and always seating children in the back seat of motor vehicles.

No child should be allowed to ride unrestrained in a vehicle. To ensure that children ride safely, law enforcement should take action on every child passenger safety law violation they see. Enforcing child passenger safety laws does not require extensive training on correct use. An officer needs only to observe a child who is at risk and do something about it. Sometimes, officers believe that if a family cannot afford to purchase a child seat, they should not add to the family's burden by giving them a ticket with a fine. But other options are available. An officer can use a stop as an educational opportunity. The officer can refer the adult to a low-cost or "loaner" child safety seat program, or refer the adult to a local child passenger safety assistance program for technical advice if there is a misuse problem.

Point 4. The fourth component of the National Strategy is to expand **effective public education** on the benefits of seat belt and child safety seat use and the requirements of seat belt and child safety seat use laws. Public education may include a broad range of activities such as high visibility enforcement campaigns, promotional events, and community-based initiatives, but these activities must be well planned and well coordinated.

To educate the public about the dangers of not using or misusing seat belts and child safety seats, efforts can range from national campaigns, such as "Vince and Larry" (designed by the Ad Council), to inclusion of passenger safety information in state driver licensing booklets, instructional programs in schools and the workplace, and one-on-one opportunities delivered by health care professionals or child care workers. The crucial element is that the public receives a single, simple message, but receives it often and in many different ways.

Specific Activities to Implement the National Strategy To Increase Seat Belt Use Nationwide

The President

The President is taking immediate action to support these goals:

- Establish the National Strategy for increasing motor vehicle seat belt and child safety seat use as an Administration priority
- Issue a new Executive Order directing all agencies to: require on-the-job seat belt use for all Federal employees; directs the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Park Service to institute programs and policies to increase seat belt use on DoD installations and in national park areas; encourages Tribal Governments to adopt programs and policies for highways on Tribal lands; and encourages government contractors, subcontractors, and grantees to institute on-the-job seat belt use programs and policies for their employees
- Ask all Americans to take responsibility for their own safety and their family's safety by making certain that everyone is properly buckled up, on every trip

Congress

To assist citizens, communities, and states to increase their seat belt and child safety seat use rates, and to provide them the tools they need, Members of Congress should:

- Enact and fully fund Section 2002 (m) of the Administration's National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act of 1997 (NEXTEA) which provides incentive grants to states for improving their occupant protection programs or their seat belt use rates; and Section 11006 of the Surface Transportation Safety Act of 1997 which provides for a transfer of a certain percentage of a state's highway construction funds to safety programs, beginning in FY 2003, if the state fails to enact primary seat belt laws or fails to reach specified seat belt use levels
- Fully fund the occupant protection portions of the Department of Transportation's fiscal year 1998 budget request
- Advocate seat belt and child safety seat use publicly and with constituents
- Actively support and become involved in coalitions of businesses and national organizations to advance seat belt and child safety seat education, legislation, and enforcement

Federal Agencies

All Federal agencies will:

- Implement the President's Executive Order which directs all agencies to require on-the-job seat belt use for all Federal employees; directs the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Park Service to institute programs and policies to increase seat belt use on DoD installations and in national park areas; encourages

- Tribal Governments to adopt programs and policies for highways on Tribal lands; and encourages government contractors, subcontractors, and grantees to institute on-the-job seat belt use programs and policies for their employees
- Provide information annually to the Department of Transportation on seat belt use rates and statistics of crashes, injuries, and related costs involving Federal employees
- Promote proper seat belt and child safety seat use in regular activities with constituents

Some Departments will do more:

Department of Transportation

Secretary of Transportation

- Establish seat belt and child safety seat use as a top DOT priority
- Direct all DOT modes to promote seat belt and child safety seat use with constituents
- Promote seat belt and child safety seat use in speeches and through media events
- Conduct a public/private round table to enlist corporate America
- Praise states, such as the District of Columbia, when they enact new primary seat belt laws
- Develop a model employee program of education, awareness, and data collection and transfer the model program to other agencies
- Conduct national and regional Moving Kids Safely conferences to develop and strengthen intermodal and public/private partnerships

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,
in Cooperation with Other Modal Administrations

- Promote seat belt and child safety seat use with constituents and partner organizations
- Provide assistance to states seeking to enact or strengthen seat belt and child passenger safety legislation
- Provide financial support and technical assistance to states to support their efforts to actively and visibly enforce their seat belt and child passenger safety laws through expanded special traffic enforcement programs (STEP)
- Encourage increased participation by private and nonprofit partners to work with the agency, or as part of a coalition, to increase seat belt and child safety seat use
- Assist states to link crash, cost, and injury data
- Work with the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) program and other employer groups to encourage additional employers to adopt seat belt use policies and programs
- Participate in building 200 additional Safe Communities (local programs that reduce fatalities, injuries, and associated costs) annually

Department of Defense

- Adopt and actively enforce seat belt use policies on DoD installations
- Provide information annually to the Department of Transportation on seat belt use rates and statistics of crashes, injuries, and related costs involving occupants of motor vehicles driven on DoD installations
- Expand base safety officer training to include child safety seat education and use programs

Department of Education

- Encourage health and safety officials in school districts to include the proper use of seat belts and child restraint systems in their health and wellness programs
- Work with NHTSA to encourage the development and adoption of a traffic safety curriculum for grades K-12 which stresses proper seat belt and child safety seat use
- Encourage school districts to adopt policies concerning seat belt and child safety seat use when transporting children

Department of Health and Human Services

- Continue child safety seat training through public health offices, emphasizing proper restraint use and appropriate restraint systems (including seat belts and infant, toddler and booster seats)
- Continue to include child passenger safety education as part of the Healthy Child Care America Campaign for child care providers
- Promote seat belt and child safety seat use through all Maternal and Child Health programs
- Encourage adults, especially older persons, to wear seat belts properly at all times
- Promote passenger protection initiatives through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Safe America program
- Promote child safety seat use and educate parents through the Head Start program

Department of Interior

- Adopt and actively enforce seat belt use policies in national park areas
- Provide information annually to the Department of Transportation on seat belt use rates and statistics of crashes, injuries, and related costs involving occupants of motor vehicles driven in national park areas
- Encourage Tribal Governments to adopt and actively enforce mandatory seat belt and child safety seat use laws
- Implement and expand seat belt and child safety seat education programs and training on Tribal lands

Department of Justice

- Encourage active and highly visible enforcement of seat belt and child safety seat laws as part of community policing efforts

- Include seat belt and child safety seat enforcement projects in DOJ-funded programs

Department of Labor

- Include seat belt use in performance-based workplace safety and health programs

States

States can take direct action to protect their citizens and reduce the costs of injuries to unrestrained occupants. States should:

- Meet or exceed the National Goals of 85% seat belt use by the year 2000 and 90% by 2005
- Ensure strong support and participation from state leadership
- Build public-private partnerships to develop and execute statewide strategies
- Adopt primary (standard) seat belt enforcement laws and comprehensive child passenger safety laws to ensure coverage of all children up to age 16
- Support active, highly visible occupant protection law enforcement efforts
- Assess meaningful penalties for seat belt and child safety seat violations
- Provide resources for enforcement of seat belt and child passenger safety laws
- Support and coordinate public information and education programs
- Establish motor vehicle crash, injury, and cost data bases to quantify problems and measure success
- Ensure the availability of child safety seats for every child and provide technical support to ensure that children are properly positioned in correctly installed safety seats

Selected Activities:

- Participate in the Air Bag Safety Campaign's Spring Mobilization and other national efforts (e.g., *Buckle Up, America!* and *Child Passenger Safety Week*)
- Provide law enforcement training and technical assistance (e.g., peer-to-peer, Chief Challenges, recognitions)
- Conduct annual seat belt use surveys to measure program success
- Work with law enforcement organizations to include seat belt and child safety seat use and enforcement training as part of standardized law enforcement curricula
- Sponsor prosecutor and judicial training to educate prosecutors and judges on the enforcement and adjudication issues regarding seat belt and child safety seat laws
- Conduct educational activities with state and local elected officials and their state organizations
- Encourage and assist in the development of Safe Community coalitions

National Organizations and Coalitions

Many national organizations and coalitions already support seat belt and child safety seat

legislation, enforcement, and education. All organizations should:

- Adopt seat belt and child safety seat use policies for their employees and encourage their members to do the same
- Support primary (standard) seat belt use laws and comprehensive child passenger safety laws to ensure coverage of all children up to age 16
- Support strong enforcement of occupant protection laws
- Assist in educating their constituencies on the importance of correct, full time seat belt and child safety seat use

Selected Activities:

- Join in coalitions with other national organizations to advance seat belt and child safety seat education, legislation, and enforcement
- Contact private sector businesses and other local, state, and national organizations to provide information and recruit their involvement, and speak to executive boards annual meetings about the importance of passenger protection
- Identify needs among members and partners for child safety seat training; provide training materials as needed; establish delivery mechanisms
- Identify target groups, determine outreach methods, and produce appropriate resource materials (NHTSA can provide technical assistance)

Business

Businesses have a crucial role to play in increasing proper seat belt and child safety seat use. They also will realize substantial benefits through decreased crash injury costs to their employees and their families. Businesses should:

- Support primary (standard) enforcement seat belt use laws and comprehensive child passenger safety laws to ensure coverage of all children up to age 16
- Support strong enforcement of seat belt and child passenger safety laws
- Implement seat belt use policies and programs for their employees and their families
- Communicate seat belt and child safety seat use messages to their customers
- Join in coalitions with other businesses and national organizations (or affiliates) to advance seat belt and child safety seat education, legislation, and enforcement
- Contribute resources (both direct funding and in-kind services) to support outreach activities and public information and education efforts

Selected Activities:

- Join Safe Community coalitions
- Join with government and national organizations in a broad-based occupant protection campaign and recruit additional participants
- Determine similar companies that have effective seat belt use policies and

programs; set goals for company policies and programs; provide awards and recognition for outstanding employees, work teams, or divisions

Media

Media organizations have a responsibility and a special role to play. The media should:

- Implement seat belt use policies and programs for their employees and their employees' families
- Help educate the public on the benefits of proper, full time seat belt and child safety seat use and the consequences of non-use
- Publicize state and community seat belt and child passenger safety enforcement efforts
- In stories about crashes, indicate whether seat belts and child safety seats were properly being used in stories about crashes

Selected Activities:

- Request that all major television and radio networks develop and implement effective policies for reporting and illustrating seat belt and child safety seat use in news and entertainment programming
- Establish periodic monitoring and reporting of media practices with recognition for exemplary performance
- Serve on local task forces to assist in community efforts
- Request that on-air traffic reporters include seat belt and child safety seat messages during their on-going reporting

Sports Participants and Organizations

Sports organizations and teams at all levels (professional, college, school, and neighborhood) can promote the use of seat belts. Athletes can serve as role models and spokespersons. Sports organizations, teams, and individual athletes should:

- Implement seat belt use policies and programs for their employees, their families, and their fans to promote a healthy lifestyle
- Participate in national, state, and local seat belt and child safety seat campaigns.

Selected Activities:

- Promote seat belt and child safety seat use through special events and media participation
- Champion safety through announcements, electronic scoreboards, signs, buttons, and promotional items
- Sponsor "Buckle Up" promotions at games
- Establish ongoing arena seat belt programs including parking lot promotions and signs
- Join Safe Community coalitions

Communities

Most education and law enforcement takes place in our cities, counties, towns, and villages.

Communities should:

- Meet or exceed the National Goals of 85% seat belt use by the year 2000 and 90% by 2005
- Seek leadership and participation from mayors, councils, boards, and other local officials
- Implement seat belt use policies for all public employees
- Support traffic enforcement as one of their best investments in public safety
- Publicize state passenger protection laws and local ordinances
- Establish a Safe Community coalition

Selected Activities:

- Encourage health care providers to assist in delivering passenger safety messages during health care visits
- Educate child care providers on how to transport children safely and provide information on proper seat belt and child safety seat use for distribution
- Participate in International Association of Chiefs of Police or other Chief Challenges
- Execute coordinated public information and education efforts relating to seat belts and child safety seats
- Provide seat belt and child safety seat training for school health/safety officials and educators
- Encourage prosecutors and judges to send a firm message to the public that seat belt and child restraint laws are important
- Encourage schools to teach children of all ages proper traffic safety practices, including seat belt and child safety seat use
- Organize child safety seat loaner programs and provide technical assistance to ensure that children are properly positioned in correctly installed safety seats
- Require students who park on school property to use seat belts and monitor results
- Conduct child safety seat clinics at preschools, restaurants, shopping area parking lots, and other locations where young children in safety seats are likely to visit

Private Citizens

Ultimately, it is the individual who must take responsibility for his or her own behavior. Since young children are unable to protect themselves, parents and care givers are responsible for transporting children safely. Every person living in America should:

- Buckle up -- every time, every trip
- Properly secure every child in a vehicle in a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt appropriate for the child's age and weight
- Place children in the safest place in a vehicle -- the back seat

- Never put a rear facing child seat (the kind used for infants) in the front seat of a car with an air bag
- Seek assistance if unsure about the correct way to secure a child in a safety seat or about the proper installation of a safety seat into a vehicle

Reporting and Recognition

The Department of Transportation will coordinate and monitor progress of the National Strategy and will issue an Annual Report to the President each year by March 1. This report will include seat belt use rates and crash statistics. It will also report on seat belt use rates, crashes, injuries, and related costs involving Federal employees on official business and occupants of motor vehicles driven on Federal lands. Specific programs that have made significant progress, or are notable and deserving of recognition, will be identified.

Funding

As is appropriate for a National Strategy in which everyone has a role, funding comes from many sources. States and communities make substantial expenditures to enforce their passenger protection laws and to educate the public about seat belt and child safety seat use. The private sector has also contributed substantially toward education, legislation, and enforcement activities to increase seat belt use. In particular, members of the Air Bag Safety Campaign will contribute over \$14 million toward the Campaign during its first two years, and many individual companies are conducting additional activities at their own expense. Virtually every highway safety organization in America is participating actively in this effort. The benefits that these organizations receive, in reduced traffic injuries, fatalities, and economic costs, will far exceed their expenditures. The level of voluntary commitment and funding that currently exists must continue.

The Federal Government has done, and will continue to do, its part. Specific funds to increase seat belt and child safety seat use are included in the Department of Transportation's FY 1998 budget request and the Department's reauthorization proposal. In FY 1998, the Department has requested \$10.184 million for occupant protection activities and an additional \$9 million for occupant protection incentive grants to states. The Department of Transportation's reauthorization proposal includes \$20 million in each of the years FY 1998-2001 and \$22 million for each of the years FY 2002-2003 for state occupant protection incentive grants. It is expected that states, annually, will allocate more than \$20 million of the funds they receive from the Department of Transportation's Section 402 traffic safety grants for occupant protection activities.

Presidential Initiative for Increasing Seat Belt Use Nationwide Recommendations from the Secretary of Transportation

President Clinton's Directive

In a weekly radio address to the nation on December 28, 1996, President Clinton asked all Americans to always wear seat belts as a first line of defense against traffic injuries and fatalities and always to keep children, ages 12 and under, buckled in the back seat where they are safest. On January 23, 1997, the President directed the Secretary of Transportation to prepare a plan to increase the use of seat belts nationwide.

The President directed the Secretary to work with Congress, the states, and other concerned Americans, including the automobile and insurance industries and safety and consumer groups, to develop the plan. He further directed that the plan address: 1) state laws that require the use of seat belts; 2) assistance from the Department of Transportation to improve these state laws; and 3) a comprehensive education campaign on behalf of the public and private sectors to help the public understand the need to wear seat belts.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), as the lead agency in developing the plan, met with and solicited input from Congress, other Federal agencies, the states, the private sector, including automobile manufacturers and insurers, and many other groups and organizations. The plan presented here is based on their advice and on a solid foundation of research and practical experience with strategies to increase seat belt use.

Background

Crashes Aren't Accidents

The vast majority of all fatal and non-fatal injuries in America are not acts of fate but are predictable and preventable. Injuries are a major health care problem and are the leading cause of death for persons ages 1 to 42. Fatalities, however, are only a small part of the total injury picture. For each injury-related death, there are 19 hospitalizations for injury and over 300 injuries that require medical attention. Every year, one in four Americans will have a potentially preventable injury serious enough to require medical care. These injuries account for almost 10 percent of all physician office visits and 38 percent of all emergency department visits. Injury patterns vary by age group, gender, and cultural group. There are also seasonal and geographic patterns to injury. Injuries pose a significant drain on the health care system, incurring huge treatment, acute care, and rehabilitation costs.

Traffic injuries are the leading cause of injury deaths and the leading cause of all deaths for people ages 6 to 27. Each year, traffic injuries in America produce \$150.5 billion in economic costs, including \$17 billion in medical care. Traffic injuries are the principal cause of on-the-job fatalities and the third largest cause of all deaths in the United States; only heart attacks and cancer kill more people. However, far more people are injured and survive motor vehicle crashes than die in these crashes. In 1995, for example, while almost 41,800 persons were killed in traffic crashes, over 3.4 million were injured in police-reported crashes. These injured persons often

require medical care and many require long-term care. For children, the problem is equally dramatic; motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for children ages 6 to 14. In 1995, the 0-14 age group accounted for 7 percent (2,794) of all traffic fatalities.

Traffic crashes aren't "accidents." They are both predictable and preventable. And the quickest, easiest, and most effective way to prevent traffic injuries and fatalities is to make certain that every vehicle occupant is properly buckled up on every trip.

It's Everyone's Problem

The motor vehicle injury problem affects all Americans. Although personal pain and suffering, loss of a loved one, and dealing with the impact of a seriously injured family member cannot be measured, these factors cannot be overlooked. Individuals also bear the economic costs of motor vehicle crashes -- on average, \$580 a year for every person in America. When someone is involved in a motor vehicle crash, everyone bears the costs of the emergency response providers, higher medical and insurance costs, and lost productivity. When individuals don't wear seat belts, costs increase considerably.

Because government at all levels pays some of the costs of traffic injuries, government at all levels has the responsibility to reduce traffic injuries and costs. Publicly-funded health programs and other public services, such as law enforcement and emergency medical services, are greatly impacted whenever someone is injured in a motor vehicle crash. For instance, according to a 1996 NHTSA study of 10 states, 24 percent of inpatient hospital costs are paid by Medicare, Medicaid, and other government sources. When a problem of this magnitude exists, government must take action to keep these crash-related costs under control. NHTSA estimates that if seat belt usage rates for front seat passengers (in automobiles and light trucks) were to increase from the present 68 percent to 85 percent, Medicare and Medicaid would save \$275 million a year (in 1996 dollars). With a 90 percent use rate, the savings would be \$356 million a year!

Business incurs enormous costs from traffic crashes through lost productivity and higher insurance and medical costs. On-the-job crashes cost employers almost \$22,000 per crash and \$110,000 per injury. Traffic crashes on- and off-the-job cost American business an estimated \$55 billion in 1994. It pays for business to participate in solving this problem on behalf of its employees, for those who consume its products and services, and for its own bottom line.

The health care industry shares in the economic burden produced by traffic injuries. Many health care costs of traffic injuries are either not reimbursed or are paid with taxpayer dollars. On average, hospital charges for an unbelted driver admitted as an inpatient exceed the inpatient hospital charges of a belted driver by \$5,000.

Insurance premiums reflect part of the problem. When a person is injured in a motor vehicle crash, someone pays -- private insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, the injured person, or the victim's family. When the person is not properly restrained, everybody pays more. Insurance companies

frequently assume the financial burden of injuries requiring long term treatment and care and pass the costs on to customers as higher premiums. If an insurance company is not involved, or if the coverage is insufficient, eventually some treatment costs are paid with taxpayer dollars.

Preventing needless injuries and deaths requires a commitment to traffic safety at all levels of government -- local, state¹, and Federal. It also requires the support of partners in private industry, citizen groups, and nonprofit organizations. Most important, this problem requires individuals to take personal responsibility for their own and their family's safety by making certain that everyone is properly buckled up, every time, on every trip.

America's Experience with Seat Belt and Child Seat Use

Seat belts work. They are the most effective means of reducing fatalities and serious injuries when traffic crashes occur. They are estimated to save 9,500 lives in America each year. Research has found that lap/shoulder belts, when used properly, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants by 45 percent and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50 percent. For light truck occupants, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60 percent and moderate-to-critical injury by 65 percent.

Every 14 seconds, someone in America is injured in a traffic crash. Every 12 minutes, someone is killed in a crash. Often, when a traffic crash happens, the victim doesn't see the incident coming until it's too late. At the moment of impact, unbelted occupants are still traveling at the vehicle's original speed. Just after the vehicle comes to a complete stop, unbelted occupants will slam into the steering wheel, windshield, or other parts of the vehicle's interior. Seat belts are effective in reducing fatalities and injuries caused by the second collision, or "human collision," when the vehicle's occupants hit some part of the vehicle interior or other occupants. Seat belts also provide the greatest protection against occupant ejection. In fatal crashes in 1995, only 2 percent of restrained passenger car occupants were ejected, compared to 25 percent of unrestrained occupants. Ejection from the vehicle is one of the most injurious events that can happen to a person in a crash. Three-quarters of the occupants who are ejected from passenger cars are killed.

While the first seat belts were installed by automobile manufacturers in the 1950s, seat belt use was very low -- only 10-15 percent nationwide -- until the early 1980s. From 1984 through 1987, belt use increased from 14 percent to 42 percent as a result of the passage of seat belt use laws in 31 states. Then, from 1990 through 1992, belt use increased from 49 percent to 62 percent as a result of a national effort of highly visible enforcement and public education.

Since then, belt use has risen slowly and some states have struggled to maintain seat belt use at

¹References in this report to "states" apply to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Indian Nations, and the United States Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

current levels. In 1996, belt use nationwide was 68 percent, and ranged across the states from a high of 87 percent in California, to a low of 43 percent in North Dakota. Currently, 49 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and all the U.S. Territories have seat belt laws. New Hampshire is the only exception. (New Hampshire requires seat belt use up to age 12.) In 38 states, the law provides only for "secondary" enforcement of seat belt violations, requiring an officer to stop a violator for another infraction before issuing a citation for failure to buckle up. Under primary enforcement, a citation can be written whenever a law enforcement officer observes an unbelted driver or passenger. Currently, 11 states, the U.S. Territories, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia, have primary (or "standard") enforcement laws. Maryland recently passed a primary seat belt enforcement law that goes into effect October 1, 1997. California, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, the Virgin Islands, and the District of Columbia had secondary enforcement laws, but upgraded their laws to primary enforcement. No state, except the District of Columbia, has a seat belt use law that assesses driver license penalty points. The District of Columbia's new law, after a six-month grace period to educate the public, authorizes the assessment of two penalty points and a \$50 fine for a seat belt use violation. The District's new law covers all seating positions.

Seat belt use in the 11 states with primary (standard) seat belt use laws currently averages about 15 percentage points higher than in states with secondary laws. California and Louisiana increased their seat belt use rate by 13 and 18 percentage points, respectively, by upgrading their secondary laws to primary. Early reports from Georgia suggest that similar gains will be achieved. Georgia had a use rate of 53 percent near the end of 1995, which fell to 51 percent shortly before the change to primary enforcement on July 1, 1996. After four months of primary enforcement (and despite the media's and law enforcement's attention on the Olympics during that period), statewide use was observed at 62 percent.

To understand why seat belt use is not higher, it is important to understand who does not use seat belts. Americans can be classified as *non-users*, *part-time users*, and *full-time users*.

Non-users represent only 5 to 10 percent of the population, but are the most difficult to convert to seat belt use. High risk drivers are most typically *non-users* of seat belts. They are more likely than others to drive after drinking, to be involved in a serious crash, and are also the least likely to be responsible for the social and economic consequences of their behavior. These are the drivers who would benefit most from using their seat belts. They often appear to believe that seat belts can cause more harm than good or that government should not mandate behaviors that affect only them. Non-users come from all segments of society but are frequently male, less than 30 years of age, unmarried, and have little or no post-secondary education. They often drive pickup trucks or sport utility vehicles and live in rural areas.

Part-time users are often people who believe that seat belts reduce the severity of injury in motor vehicle crashes but who also believe that they are not at risk when driving on short, familiar, low speed trips. Many part-time users think of themselves as full-time users because they wear their belts when they believe they are at risk of crash involvement. The greatest gains in seat belt use

have been achieved by increasing the number of situations in which part-time users wear their seat belts. Since members of this group already believe that seat belts are beneficial, they may be converted to full-time users through education, but messages must be presented in new ways so part-time users will pay attention.

Almost three-quarters of Americans say they are *full-time* users. However, of these, almost 10 percent acknowledge that they did not use their seat belts at least once during the past week. In NHTSA surveys, full-time users say their primary reason for wearing seat belts is to avoid injury. (Part-time users also state this as their number one reason to buckle up.) Studies have shown that self-reported seat belt use is 12 to 25 percentage points higher than observed use. In NHTSA observational surveys, the female use rate is 10 percentage points higher than the male use rate. Overall seat belt use rates are highest in the suburbs, followed by cities, then rural areas.

A barrier to increasing seat belt use is that many state and local leaders do not understand the linkage of seat belt use to social burdens. The combined costs to government, health care systems, business, and individuals make this a community issue that cannot be ignored or underestimated. The failure to recognize that seat belt use reduces deaths, injuries, and costs has resulted in the adoption of secondary belt laws in many states. These laws often are not enforced vigorously.

Child safety seats work. Children, especially those under the age of 5, are vulnerable in collisions because of the size and shape of their bodies. The child safety seat is designed to spread the forces of a crash over more of the body for front-facing toddlers, and cradles the fragile neck and back of the rear-facing infant.

Child safety seats are the most effective occupant protection devices used in motor vehicles today. If used correctly, they are 71 percent effective in reducing fatalities in children under the age of 5 and 69 percent effective in reducing the need for hospitalization. Unfortunately, parents and other care givers too often consider child seats inconvenient, out of their financial reach, or too difficult to install. Others are uninformed or misinformed about correct child safety seat use. About 50 percent of children under 5 who died in crashes were unrestrained. Of the remaining 50 percent, 26 percent were in an adult seat belt which does not provide effective protection for most children under age 5. Others were in a child restraint system, but had not been restrained properly. In studies conducted by NHTSA to observe child safety seat misuse, nearly 80 percent of the child seats observed were misused in one or more ways. In some cases, the seat was not properly attached to the vehicle; in others, the child was not appropriately buckled into the seat.

Seat belts and child safety seats work. Yet, fewer than 40 percent of both adults and children who died in traffic crashes were properly restrained.

Seat Belt and Child Safety Seat Use Outside the United States

Many other countries have seat belt use rates significantly higher than the United States. For

example, use rates in Canada, Australia, and several Western European countries exceed 90 percent, while use rates in Great Britain exceed 80 percent. Seat belt use laws in these countries typically allow primary (standard) enforcement and also cover occupants of light trucks and vans in addition to automobiles. Fines for noncompliance are generally higher than in the United States, and some jurisdictions assess demerit points against driver's licenses for seat belt use law violations. In contrast, except for the District of Columbia, states in the U.S. do not assess penalty points for adult seat belt use violations.

In Europe, some countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) have laws that permit child passengers in the front seat provided they are in a child safety seat or seat belt. This approach is typical of state laws in the U.S. Other European countries (Belgium, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Spain) have child passenger safety laws that require children up to a specified age and weight to ride in the rear seat. However, some of these countries have exemptions to these laws that permit children to ride in front passenger seating positions provided they are in a child safety seat or seat belt. Foreign child passenger safety laws are often "nationwide" as opposed to state-by-state as they are in the U.S.

Belt use rates in Canada and the U.S. did not differ markedly until the mid-1980s, when Canadian provinces began implementing comprehensive special traffic enforcement programs (STEPS). These highly publicized enforcement efforts achieved belt use rates in the 80 percent range. When Canada decided to establish a national 95 percent seat belt use goal, provinces amended their laws to add driver license penalty points. With these penalty point provisions, seat belt use in Canada has risen to 92 percent for drivers and 90 percent for front seat passengers.

Taking Responsibility

It's Easy to Increase Seat Belt Use -- All It Takes Is Everyone

Click! Buckle up. It's easy and it takes three seconds. Once a person establishes the habit of wearing seat belts on every trip, it's usually a habit for life. And examples from businesses, local communities, states, and many other countries show that seat belt use can be increased in America.

Just as the problem of low seat belt use rates belongs to everyone in America, so does the solution. Everyone must buckle up properly, on every trip. Only through the cooperation of all levels of government (Federal, state, and local), the private sector, interest groups, citizen activists, other interested parties, and individuals, can the nation begin to reach its goal. Through collective partnerships, individuals *can* be educated and encouraged to change behavior and assume personal responsibility for themselves and their families.

In this partnership, the Federal Government has a role to play. It can develop the "tools" for this collective effort, help establish new partnerships, provide formula and incentive grants, give

hands-on assistance when requested, and furnish examples of model programs that work and can be replicated nationwide.

Many states, communities, and organizations have helped raise seat belt and child safety seat use substantially. Their successful methods can be shared and duplicated. Below are some examples of "best practices":

- North Carolina's multi-partnered "Click It or Ticket" provides an excellent example. North Carolina began this highly visible enforcement program in 1993, modeled on the successful Canadian STEPs. Seat belt use rose from 65 percent to 83 percent, one of the nation's highest use rates. In the first two years of "Click It or Ticket," fatal and serious injuries were reduced by 15 percent and taxpayers saved more than \$100 million in health care related costs. Nearly every law enforcement agency in the state participates in the program.
- The Navajo Nation Tribal Council passed a seat belt use law in 1988. Tribal enforcement and awareness activities began that year and expanded in 1992 with a Federal grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to establish a Community Traffic Safety Program to emphasize raising the tribe's seat belt use. The program combined community-wide education, school-based injury prevention, Safe Kids coalition programs, and a child safety seat loaner program. The program also provided for improved traffic records, defensive driver training, and an impaired driving task force. Navajo Police undertook aggressive enforcement of the tribe's primary (standard) occupant protection laws through routine patrols and highly publicized checkpoints. By the end of 1995, surveys showed that low belt use on the reservation (initially measured at 8 percent) soared to 78 percent for the Navajo people and there was a 50 percent drop in hospital admissions. Tribal employees operating government vehicles are now buckling up 100 percent of the time.
- The United Parcel Service (UPS) boasts a solid traffic safety record. With more than 84,000 drivers nationwide, UPS has a zero tolerance policy for unsafe driver behavior behind the wheel. As part of its defensive driving program, based on establishing good driver habits, UPS instructs its drivers that *if the wheels are in motion, the driver must be secured with a seat belt* -- even if the vehicle is moving just a few feet. Three decades ago, UPS made a conscious decision to install seat belts in its vehicles to protect its drivers. As a result of UPS' comprehensive driver training program, wearing seat belts has become a habit among UPS employees. Since the inception of UPS' commitment to seat belt usage and other safe driving habits, fatal injury and crash rates have declined steadily.

Everyone Can Participate

Everyone in America can participate in this national effort to save lives and prevent injuries by buckling up properly on every trip. While it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual to

buckle up and to ensure that all children in a motor vehicle are properly restrained, there is also a role for many groups and organizations, both public and private, to provide the tools that will help get non-users and part-time users into the healthy habit. The following lists examples of participants and the kinds of roles they can adopt:

President: As the nation's Chief Executive, the President can provide overall leadership for seat belt use and bring together leaders of the public and private sectors, media, national organizations, and others to concentrate their energy and resources toward a single goal and mission. The President can urge Congress to support and fund policies to advance seat belt use, energize new partners, and re-energize existing partners by setting the tone and supporting a national effort.

Congress: The Senate and House of Representatives can provide funding and establish programs that encourage states to adopt legislation and to educate the public on the importance of proper seat belt and child safety seat use.

DOT Secretary: The Secretary of Transportation can provide vision and administer overall seat belt and child safety seat programs; dedicate staff for program development, implementation, and evaluation; provide funding to states (under the Highway Safety Act of 1966, as amended, 23 U.S.C. §§ 402 and 403); promote public/private partnerships; and provide leadership to other Federal agencies.

Federal Agencies: Federal agencies can promote seat belt use with their employees and constituents.

States: States can build partnerships and develop strategies to pass and visibly enforce primary (standard) seat belt enforcement laws and comprehensive child passenger safety laws. States can support and coordinate effective seat belt and child safety seat public education.

National Organizations and Coalitions: Groups such as Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, Air Bag Safety Campaign, American College of Emergency Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Coalition for Traffic Safety, International Association of Chiefs of Police, National Association of Governors' Highway Safety Representatives, National Governors' Association, Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, Parent Teacher Association, and others can provide valuable technical assistance and resources. They can build constituent efforts and partnerships, advocate strengthened laws and increased enforcement, and provide education at the state and local level.

Business: Many businesses already have made major contributions toward increasing seat belt use -- from local businesses to major international corporations. As a group, business is respected by Congress, state legislatures, community governments, and private citizens, and wields influence in determining legislative, economic, and commercial priorities. Business can promote the "healthy habit" through a wide variety of strategies and is an essential partner in collective efforts.

Media: The media and other public and private communication outlets have made the public aware of the dangers of not being properly restrained and can assist in changing behaviors. Recently, the media have reported heavily upon the several dozen persons killed by air bags to educate the public effectively about the potential dangers of these devices. The media can do the same in other areas to highlight the thousands of persons killed each year through failure to use seat belts and child safety seats, or to use them properly. The media can also help publicize state and local law enforcement efforts.

Sports Organizations and Athletes: Athletes from professional, college, school, and neighborhood sports teams can serve as role models and set examples by being seat belt wearers. Sports teams can promote seat belt use through a variety of venues, such as special activities, media events, arena programs, signs, and announcements.

Health Care Professionals: Doctors, nurses, and other medical, emergency, and health care professionals add their unique perspective to the problem. They can use their experience, knowledge, and professional reputations to educate Congress, state legislators, the media, patients, and the general public about the dangers of not buckling up and not using child restraints properly.

Prosecutors and Judges: The judicial system is an integral part of increasing seat belt and child safety seat use. The court system must support law enforcement officers who cite individuals for noncompliance of belt laws or who put their children at risk by not properly restraining them. As officers of the court, prosecutors and judges can send a firm message to the public that seat belt and child restraint laws are important.

Educators: Youth are both the problem, with very low seat belt use rates, and the solution. Proper seat belt use habits, if established when individuals are young, will likely last a lifetime. Educators can be effective in teaching and reinforcing seat belt use habits.

The National Goals

America must set ambitious seat belt and child safety seat use goals. We have an unprecedented opportunity to save lives, prevent injuries, reduce health care and other costs, and improve the lives of all Americans -- simply by increasing proper seat belt and child safety seat use. But to do this, we must be bold. We must reach beyond "business as usual." Bold goals will require commitment and cooperation from everyone living in the United States. But for the country's good, we cannot settle for less. America *can* do it.

- **Increase national seat belt use to 85% by 2000 and 90% by 2005**
(from 68% in 1996)
- **Reduce child occupant fatalities (0-4 years) by 15% in 2000 and by 25% in 2005**
(from a total of 685 in 1995)

Reaching these goals would result in significant reductions in deaths, injuries, and their economic costs to society. Increasing the seat belt use rate from the current 68 percent (1996) to 85 percent would prevent an estimated 4,194 fatalities and 102,518 injuries annually. This reduction in injuries and deaths would result in an economic savings of approximately \$6.7 billion annually (1996 dollars). Increasing the seat belt use rate from the current 68 percent to 90 percent would prevent an estimated 5,536 fatalities and 132,670 injuries annually, and would save \$8.8 billion annually.

The National Strategy

The National Strategy presents a collaborative, cooperative four point plan to achieve the ambitious national goals of increasing seat belt and child safety seat use. Individuals must take responsibility for themselves and for their child passengers by making certain everyone in the vehicle is properly buckled up -- every time and on every trip. It will, however, take the collective efforts of many people and many organizations to ensure that every person in America has the knowledge and tools to make the right choice and to take personal responsibility. The Strategy has a role for everyone and builds on the considerable activities, funding, and resources already committed by many different organizations to this common cause.

The Four Point Plan

The plan to increase seat belt use in America has four elements that, when implemented together, have proven to be effective in increasing seat belt use. The first element is the most important: We must join together to **build the public-private partnership** necessary to help America reach its potential to save lives and prevent injuries through the use of seat belts and child safety seats. In addition, each state must **enact strong legislation** and embrace **active, high visibility law enforcement**. Finally, all public and private partners must conduct well-coordinated, **effective public education**. These strategies work.

Point 1. To reach our goals, we will need to **build public-private partnerships** at the local, state, and federal levels. The problem is too big for any one group or coalition to tackle alone. No one of us is as effective as all of us are together. While it is the individual who must ultimately take responsibility to buckle up and safely secure all children riding in the vehicle, it is the responsibility of a great many to encourage, enact, enforce, and inform.

Driving is a privilege that comes with responsibilities. Through public-private partnerships, we can collectively address the seat belt non-use problem and establish a national attitude that wearing seat belts and using child safety seats is the expected behavior in America. Partnerships can coordinate and execute efforts that will weave the seat belt message into America's consciousness -- in the home, throughout hometowns, at school, in the workplace, on the road, at recreational sites, and in the media. Public and private sector organizations can join together to set the tone and serve as models who demonstrate that we are a nation that cares about children, families, good health, and well-being. By framing passenger protection as a health issue, public-private partnerships can reach millions of individuals with correct and helpful information, and encourage seat belt part-time and non-users to make the right decision and buckle up.

There are, and have been, many strong partnerships over the past 10 years that have worked to increase seat belt and child safety seat use in America. Many public and private organizations have contributed funding and in-kind resources and have worked together to achieve our Nation's current 68 percent seat belt use rate. In communities across the country, businesses have joined with service groups, law enforcement agencies, citizen activists, county engineers, schools, and others to increase local use rates. States have formed statewide seat belt coalitions, distributed information, passed and enforced laws, and developed strategies for increasing usage. Large businesses have taken on the issue because it is cost effective and it makes sense. Now it is time to energize existing partners and bring on new ones to assist in meeting the national goals. New ideas, new resources, additional energy, and additional partners are needed.

It will, however, take more than marketing a healthier lifestyle to get hard core seat belt non-wearers, and those who fail to secure their children properly in motor vehicles, to take responsibility. Additional strategies are needed.

Point 2. The second component of the National Strategy is for states to **enact strong legislation** by adopting primary (standard) seat belt laws and closing gaps in child passenger safety laws. Under primary enforcement laws, a citation can be written whenever a law enforcement officer observes an unbelted driver or passenger. In states with secondary laws, an officer can issue a citation only after the driver is stopped or cited for some other infraction. Child passenger safety laws should cover every child (up to age 16), in every seating position, in every passenger vehicle. Currently, although every state has a child passenger safety law, some laws include only very young children, some cover only the front seat, and some exempt pickup trucks and vans.

Point 3. The National Strategy's third component is to **conduct active, high-visibility enforcement** of seat belt laws is necessary to achieve higher seat belt use rates. Experience has

shown that, after seat belt laws pass, use rates rise because of the public's perception that they must buckle up. However, if the laws are not actively enforced, use rates drop. Seat belt use laws need to be enforced in the same way that other traffic infractions are, like speeding or running a red light.

An additional benefit of increased traffic enforcement, in addition to saving lives and dollars, is a measurable reduction in crime. Active, highly visible traffic enforcement provides a major opportunity to catch criminals. Because most criminals drive to and from crime scenes, it is not surprising that as many as one-third of criminal apprehensions occur as part of traffic stops. Nor is it surprising that high intensity law enforcement programs, such as those conducted in North Carolina and Tennessee, result in a large number of criminal apprehensions and recoveries of stolen property.

A variety of seat belt enforcement approaches are encouraged to fit a community's needs. Examples including ticketing, conducting checkpoints, safety checks, child safety seat clinics, and officers serving as role models by wearing their own seat belts. Active enforcement is a must. In addition, law enforcement must take every opportunity to educate the public about the importance of seat belts, child safety seats, and always seating children in the back seat of motor vehicles.

No child should be allowed to ride unrestrained in a vehicle. To ensure that children ride safely, law enforcement should take action on every child passenger safety law violation they see. Enforcing child passenger safety laws does not require extensive training on correct use. An officer needs only to observe a child who is at risk and do something about it. Sometimes, officers believe that if a family cannot afford to purchase a child seat, they should not add to the family's burden by giving them a ticket with a fine. But other options are available. An officer can use a stop as an educational opportunity. The officer can refer the adult to a low-cost or "loaner" child safety seat program, or refer the adult to a local child passenger safety assistance program for technical advice if there is a misuse problem.

Point 4. The fourth component of the National Strategy is to expand **effective public education** on the benefits of seat belt and child safety seat use and the requirements of seat belt and child safety seat use laws. Public education may include a broad range of activities such as high visibility enforcement campaigns, promotional events, and community-based initiatives, but these activities must be well planned and well coordinated.

To educate the public about the dangers of not using or misusing seat belts and child safety seats, efforts can range from national campaigns, such as "Vince and Larry" (designed by the Ad Council), to inclusion of passenger safety information in state driver licensing booklets, instructional programs in schools and the workplace, and one-on-one opportunities delivered by health care professionals or child care workers. The crucial element is that the public receives a single, simple message, but receives it often and in many different ways.

Specific Activities to Implement the National Strategy To Increase Seat Belt Use Nationwide

The President

The President is taking immediate action to support these goals:

- Establish the National Strategy for increasing motor vehicle seat belt and child safety seat use as an Administration priority
- Issue a new Executive Order directing all agencies to: require on-the-job seat belt use for all Federal employees; directs the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Park Service to institute programs and policies to increase seat belt use on DoD installations and in national park areas; encourages Tribal Governments to adopt programs and policies for highways on Tribal lands; and encourages government contractors, subcontractors, and grantees to institute on-the-job seat belt use programs and policies for their employees
- Ask all Americans to take responsibility for their own safety and their family's safety by making certain that everyone is properly buckled up, on every trip

Congress

To assist citizens, communities, and states to increase their seat belt and child safety seat use rates, and to provide them the tools they need, Members of Congress should:

- Enact and fully fund Section 2002 (m) of the Administration's National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act of 1997 (NEXTEA) which provides incentive grants to states for improving their occupant protection programs or their seat belt use rates; and Section 11006 of the Surface Transportation Safety Act of 1997 which provides for a transfer of a certain percentage of a state's highway construction funds to safety programs, beginning in FY 2003, if the state fails to enact primary seat belt laws or fails to reach specified seat belt use levels
- Fully fund the occupant protection portions of the Department of Transportation's fiscal year 1998 budget request
- Advocate seat belt and child safety seat use publicly and with constituents
- Actively support and become involved in coalitions of businesses and national organizations to advance seat belt and child safety seat education, legislation, and enforcement

Federal Agencies

All Federal agencies will:

- Implement the President's Executive Order which directs all agencies to require on-the-job seat belt use for all Federal employees; directs the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Park Service to institute programs and policies to increase seat belt use on DoD installations and in national park areas; encourages

- Tribal Governments to adopt programs and policies for highways on Tribal lands; and encourages government contractors, subcontractors, and grantees to institute on-the-job seat belt use programs and policies for their employees
- Provide information annually to the Department of Transportation on seat belt use rates and statistics of crashes, injuries, and related costs involving Federal employees
- Promote proper seat belt and child safety seat use in regular activities with constituents

Some Departments will do more:

Department of Transportation

Secretary of Transportation

- Establish seat belt and child safety seat use as a top DOT priority
- Direct all DOT modes to promote seat belt and child safety seat use with constituents
- Promote seat belt and child safety seat use in speeches and through media events
- Conduct a public/private round table to enlist corporate America
- Praise states, such as the District of Columbia, when they enact new primary seat belt laws
- Develop a model employee program of education, awareness, and data collection and transfer the model program to other agencies
- Conduct national and regional Moving Kids Safely conferences to develop and strengthen intermodal and public/private partnerships

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, in Cooperation with Other Modal Administrations

- Promote seat belt and child safety seat use with constituents and partner organizations
- Provide assistance to states seeking to enact or strengthen seat belt and child passenger safety legislation
- Provide financial support and technical assistance to states to support their efforts to actively and visibly enforce their seat belt and child passenger safety laws through expanded special traffic enforcement programs (STEP)
- Encourage increased participation by private and nonprofit partners to work with the agency, or as part of a coalition, to increase seat belt and child safety seat use
- Assist states to link crash, cost, and injury data
- Work with the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety (NETS) program and other employer groups to encourage additional employers to adopt seat belt use policies and programs
- Participate in building 200 additional Safe Communities (local programs that reduce fatalities, injuries, and associated costs) annually

Department of Defense

- Adopt and actively enforce seat belt use policies on DoD installations
- Provide information annually to the Department of Transportation on seat belt use rates and statistics of crashes, injuries, and related costs involving occupants of motor vehicles driven on DoD installations
- Expand base safety officer training to include child safety seat education and use programs

Department of Education

- Encourage health and safety officials in school districts to include the proper use of seat belts and child restraint systems in their health and wellness programs
- Work with NHTSA to encourage the development and adoption of a traffic safety curriculum for grades K-12 which stresses proper seat belt and child safety seat use
- Encourage school districts to adopt policies concerning seat belt and child safety seat use when transporting children

Department of Health and Human Services

- Continue child safety seat training through public health offices, emphasizing proper restraint use and appropriate restraint systems (including seat belts and infant, toddler and booster seats)
- Continue to include child passenger safety education as part of the Healthy Child Care America Campaign for child care providers
- Promote seat belt and child safety seat use through all Maternal and Child Health programs
- Encourage adults, especially older persons, to wear seat belts properly at all times
- Promote passenger protection initiatives through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Safe America program
- Promote child safety seat use and educate parents through the Head Start program

Department of Interior

- Adopt and actively enforce seat belt use policies in national park areas
- Provide information annually to the Department of Transportation on seat belt use rates and statistics of crashes, injuries, and related costs involving occupants of motor vehicles driven in national park areas
- Encourage Tribal Governments to adopt and actively enforce mandatory seat belt and child safety seat use laws
- Implement and expand seat belt and child safety seat education programs and training on Tribal lands

Department of Justice

- Encourage active and highly visible enforcement of seat belt and child safety seat laws as part of community policing efforts

- Include seat belt and child safety seat enforcement projects in DOJ-funded programs

Department of Labor

- Include seat belt use in performance-based workplace safety and health programs

States

States can take direct action to protect their citizens and reduce the costs of injuries to unrestrained occupants. States should:

- Meet or exceed the National Goals of 85% seat belt use by the year 2000 and 90% by 2005
- Ensure strong support and participation from state leadership
- Build public-private partnerships to develop and execute statewide strategies
- Adopt primary (standard) seat belt enforcement laws and comprehensive child passenger safety laws to ensure coverage of all children up to age 16
- Support active, highly visible occupant protection law enforcement efforts
- Assess meaningful penalties for seat belt and child safety seat violations
- Provide resources for enforcement of seat belt and child passenger safety laws
- Support and coordinate public information and education programs
- Establish motor vehicle crash, injury, and cost data bases to quantify problems and measure success
- Ensure the availability of child safety seats for every child and provide technical support to ensure that children are properly positioned in correctly installed safety seats

Selected Activities:

- Participate in the Air Bag Safety Campaign's Spring Mobilization and other national efforts (e.g., *Buckle Up, America!* and *Child Passenger Safety Week*)
- Provide law enforcement training and technical assistance (e.g., peer-to-peer, Chief Challenges, recognitions)
- Conduct annual seat belt use surveys to measure program success
- Work with law enforcement organizations to include seat belt and child safety seat use and enforcement training as part of standardized law enforcement curricula
- Sponsor prosecutor and judicial training to educate prosecutors and judges on the enforcement and adjudication issues regarding seat belt and child safety seat laws
- Conduct educational activities with state and local elected officials and their state organizations
- Encourage and assist in the development of Safe Community coalitions

National Organizations and Coalitions

Many national organizations and coalitions already support seat belt and child safety seat

legislation, enforcement, and education. All organizations should:

- Adopt seat belt and child safety seat use policies for their employees and encourage their members to do the same
- Support primary (standard) seat belt use laws and comprehensive child passenger safety laws to ensure coverage of all children up to age 16
- Support strong enforcement of occupant protection laws
- Assist in educating their constituencies on the importance of correct, full time seat belt and child safety seat use

Selected Activities:

- Join in coalitions with other national organizations to advance seat belt and child safety seat education, legislation, and enforcement
- Contact private sector businesses and other local, state, and national organizations to provide information and recruit their involvement, and speak to executive boards annual meetings about the importance of passenger protection
- Identify needs among members and partners for child safety seat training; provide training materials as needed; establish delivery mechanisms
- Identify target groups, determine outreach methods, and produce appropriate resource materials (NHTSA can provide technical assistance)

Business

Businesses have a crucial role to play in increasing proper seat belt and child safety seat use. They also will realize substantial benefits through decreased crash injury costs to their employees and their families. Businesses should:

- Support primary (standard) enforcement seat belt use laws and comprehensive child passenger safety laws to ensure coverage of all children up to age 16
- Support strong enforcement of seat belt and child passenger safety laws
- Implement seat belt use policies and programs for their employees and their families
- Communicate seat belt and child safety seat use messages to their customers
- Join in coalitions with other businesses and national organizations (or affiliates) to advance seat belt and child safety seat education, legislation, and enforcement
- Contribute resources (both direct funding and in-kind services) to support outreach activities and public information and education efforts

Selected Activities:

- Join Safe Community coalitions
- Join with government and national organizations in a broad-based occupant protection campaign and recruit additional participants
- Determine similar companies that have effective seat belt use policies and

programs; set goals for company policies and programs; provide awards and recognition for outstanding employees, work teams, or divisions

Media

Media organizations have a responsibility and a special role to play. The media should:

- Implement seat belt use policies and programs for their employees and their employees' families
- Help educate the public on the benefits of proper, full time seat belt and child safety seat use and the consequences of non-use
- Publicize state and community seat belt and child passenger safety enforcement efforts
- In stories about crashes, indicate whether seat belts and child safety seats were properly being used in stories about crashes

Selected Activities:

- Request that all major television and radio networks develop and implement effective policies for reporting and illustrating seat belt and child safety seat use in news and entertainment programming
- Establish periodic monitoring and reporting of media practices with recognition for exemplary performance
- Serve on local task forces to assist in community efforts
- Request that on-air traffic reporters include seat belt and child safety seat messages during their on-going reporting

Sports Participants and Organizations

Sports organizations and teams at all levels (professional, college, school, and neighborhood) can promote the use of seat belts. Athletes can serve as role models and spokespersons. Sports organizations, teams, and individual athletes should:

- Implement seat belt use policies and programs for their employees, their families, and their fans to promote a healthy lifestyle
- Participate in national, state, and local seat belt and child safety seat campaigns.

Selected Activities:

- Promote seat belt and child safety seat use through special events and media participation
- Champion safety through announcements, electronic scoreboards, signs, buttons, and promotional items
- Sponsor "Buckle Up" promotions at games
- Establish ongoing arena seat belt programs including parking lot promotions and signs
- Join Safe Community coalitions

Communities

Most education and law enforcement takes place in our cities, counties, towns, and villages.

Communities should:

- Meet or exceed the National Goals of 85% seat belt use by the year 2000 and 90% by 2005
- Seek leadership and participation from mayors, councils, boards, and other local officials
- Implement seat belt use policies for all public employees
- Support traffic enforcement as one of their best investments in public safety
- Publicize state passenger protection laws and local ordinances
- Establish a Safe Community coalition

Selected Activities:

- Encourage health care providers to assist in delivering passenger safety messages during health care visits
- Educate child care providers on how to transport children safely and provide information on proper seat belt and child safety seat use for distribution
- Participate in International Association of Chiefs of Police or other Chief Challenges
- Execute coordinated public information and education efforts relating to seat belts and child safety seats
- Provide seat belt and child safety seat training for school health/safety officials and educators
- Encourage prosecutors and judges to send a firm message to the public that seat belt and child restraint laws are important
- Encourage schools to teach children of all ages proper traffic safety practices, including seat belt and child safety seat use
- Organize child safety seat loaner programs and provide technical assistance to ensure that children are properly positioned in correctly installed safety seats
- Require students who park on school property to use seat belts and monitor results
- Conduct child safety seat clinics at preschools, restaurants, shopping area parking lots, and other locations where young children in safety seats are likely to visit

Private Citizens

Ultimately, it is the individual who must take responsibility for his or her own behavior. Since young children are unable to protect themselves, parents and care givers are responsible for transporting children safely. Every person living in America should:

- Buckle up -- every time, every trip
- Properly secure every child in a vehicle in a child safety seat, booster seat, or seat belt appropriate for the child's age and weight
- Place children in the safest place in a vehicle -- the back seat

- Never put a rear facing child seat (the kind used for infants) in the front seat of a car with an air bag
- Seek assistance if unsure about the correct way to secure a child in a safety seat or about the proper installation of a safety seat into a vehicle

Reporting and Recognition

The Department of Transportation will coordinate and monitor progress of the National Strategy and will issue an Annual Report to the President each year by March 1. This report will include seat belt use rates and crash statistics. It will also report on seat belt use rates, crashes, injuries, and related costs involving Federal employees on official business and occupants of motor vehicles driven on Federal lands. Specific programs that have made significant progress, or are notable and deserving of recognition, will be identified.

Funding

As is appropriate for a National Strategy in which everyone has a role, funding comes from many sources. States and communities make substantial expenditures to enforce their passenger protection laws and to educate the public about seat belt and child safety seat use. The private sector has also contributed substantially toward education, legislation, and enforcement activities to increase seat belt use. In particular, members of the Air Bag Safety Campaign will contribute over \$14 million toward the Campaign during its first two years, and many individual companies are conducting additional activities at their own expense. Virtually every highway safety organization in America is participating actively in this effort. The benefits that these organizations receive, in reduced traffic injuries, fatalities, and economic costs, will far exceed their expenditures. The level of voluntary commitment and funding that currently exists must continue.

The Federal Government has done, and will continue to do, its part. Specific funds to increase seat belt and child safety seat use are included in the Department of Transportation's FY 1998 budget request and the Department's reauthorization proposal. In FY 1998, the Department has requested \$10.184 million for occupant protection activities and an additional \$9 million for occupant protection incentive grants to states. The Department of Transportation's reauthorization proposal includes \$20 million in each of the years FY 1998-2001 and \$22 million for each of the years FY 2002-2003 for state occupant protection incentive grants. It is expected that states, annually, will allocate more than \$20 million of the funds they receive from the Department of Transportation's Section 402 traffic safety grants for occupant protection activities.

The National Strategy to Increase Seat Belt Use

"If there is one thing we can do to save thousands of American lives, it is to increase seat belt use nationwide."

President William J. Clinton, December 28, 1996

In a weekly radio address to the nation on December 28, 1996, President Clinton asked all Americans to always wear seat belts as a first line of defense against traffic injuries and fatalities and always to keep children, ages 12 and under, buckled in the back seat where they are safest. On January 23, 1997, the President directed the Secretary of Transportation to prepare a plan to increase the use of seat belts nationwide. The President directed the Secretary to work with Congress, the states, and other concerned Americans, including the automobile and insurance industries and safety and consumer groups, to develop the plan. He further directed that the plan address: 1) state laws that require the use of seat belts; 2) assistance from the Department of Transportation (DOT) to improve these state laws; and 3) a comprehensive education campaign on behalf of the public and private sectors to help the public understand the need to wear seat belts.

This report presents the Administration's findings and recommendations to save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce the associated medical care costs of traffic crashes through the proper use of seat belts and child safety seats. It presents new national goals for seat belt and child safety seat use and a national strategy to reach these ambitious goals.

It's Everyone's Problem

Every 14 seconds, someone in America is injured in a traffic crash. Every 12 minutes, someone is killed in a crash. Traffic-related injuries are the leading cause of all injury deaths in America and the leading cause of death for people ages six through 27. They cost \$150.5 billion a year, including \$17 billion in medical care costs. In 1995, almost 41,800 persons were killed in motor vehicle-related crashes, over 3.4 million were injured in police-reported crashes, and an even greater number utilized hospital emergency rooms.

The current seat belt use rate in America is 68%. Seat belt use rose as 49 States passed seat belt laws. But since then, seat belt use has risen slowly and some states have been struggling to maintain use rates at current levels. In addition, half of the children under age five who die in traffic crashes are not secured in child safety seats. In observational

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for Americans ages 6-27. Someone in America is injured in a traffic crash every 14 seconds; every 12 minutes, someone is killed.

"One of our greatest responsibilities: taking care to protect ourselves and our children... on the road."

President Clinton

studies, nearly 80% of child safety seats in use were not being used correctly.

We must do better. *Seat Belts Work:* Seat belts are the most effective means of reducing fatalities and serious injuries in traffic crashes. They are estimated to save 9,500 lives in America each year. Research has found that lap/shoulder belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants by 45% and the risk of moderate-to-critical injury by 50%. For light truck occupants, seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 60% and moderate-to-critical injury by 65%. *Child Safety Seats Work:* They are the most effective occupant protection devices used in motor vehicles today. If used correctly, they are 71% effective in reducing fatalities in children under the age of five and 69% effective in reducing the need for hospitalization. *Primary Belt Laws Work:* In most states, seat belt laws are enforced only when a driver is stopped for some other reason. (so-called "secondary" laws). But 11 states have adopted "primary" seat belt laws, which allow for ticketing solely for failure to use a seat belt, and Maryland just passed this legislation. Seat belt use in the 11 states is fully 15% higher. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that enactment of primary belt laws by the other 38 states would make similar gains.

A National Strategy to Increase Seat Belt Use

This National Strategy sets new national seat belt use goals and presents a collaborative, simple, four point plan in which everyone can participate to achieve the goals. The plan emphasizes personal responsibility to buckle up and to properly secure all children while riding in motor vehicles.

New National Goals:

- **Increase national seat belt use to 85% by 2000 and 90% by 2005**
- **Reduce child occupant fatalities (0-4 years) 15% by 2000 and 25% by 2005**

Reaching 85% seat belt use would result in preventing an estimated 4,194 fatalities, 102,518 injuries, and save \$6.7 billion annually.

Reaching 90% seat belt use would result in preventing an estimated 5,536 fatalities, 132,670 injuries, and save \$8.8 billion annually.

The Nation Can Achieve These Goals By:

- **Building partnerships** between government and the private sector to help America reach its potential of saving lives and preventing injuries through the use of seat belts and child safety seats;

The plan to increase seat belt use has four elements that, when implemented together, have proven to be effective in raising seat belt use rates.

- **Enacting state laws** for primary (standard) seat belt enforcement and comprehensive child passenger safety;
- Conducting **active, high visibility law enforcement** of state seat belt and child safety seat laws; and
- Expanding well-coordinated, **effective public education** programs.

Urging Everyone's Participation

Everyone in America can participate in this national effort to save lives and prevent injuries by buckling up properly on every trip. While it is ultimately the responsibility of the individual to buckle up and to ensure that all children in a motor vehicle are properly restrained, there is also a role for government at all levels and for many groups and organizations, both public and private, to provide the tools that will help get seat belt non-users and part-time users to buckle up.

The National Strategy recommends actions are for many partners, including:

Key Administration Actions

President Clinton has proposed legislation to provide strong financial incentives for states to increase seat belt use and, specifically, to pass primary seat belt laws.

- President Clinton proposed legislation in March, 1997, to provide states with financial incentives for improving their occupant protection programs and seat belt use rates, and to pass primary seat belt enforcement laws.
- President Clinton will propose legislation that further strengthens states' incentives to increase seat belt use. States that do not achieve 85% belt use or pass primary seat belt laws by October, 2002, would have to transfer 1.5% of their federal highway construction funds to their highway safety programs.

In addition:

- President Clinton is issuing an Executive Order that: directs Federal agencies to require on-the-job seat belt use for all Federal employees; directs the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Park Service to institute programs and policies to increase seat belt use on DoD installations and in national park areas; encourages Tribal Governments to adopt

**Everyone has a
role in raising
America's seat
belt use rate:**
*President Clinton
Private Citizens
Federal agencies
Congress
States
Communities
National
organizations
& coalitions
Business
Law enforcement
Health care
professionals
Educators
Prosecutors
& judges
Media
Sports participants
& organizations*

programs and policies for highways on Tribal lands; and encourages government contractors, subcontractors, and grantees to institute on-the-job seat belt use programs and policies for their employees.

Key Partner Actions

The National Strategy also urges:

- States to support active, highly visible occupant protection law enforcement, and support and coordinate seat belt and child information and education programs
- National organizations to assist in educating their constituencies on the importance of correct, full time seat belt and child safety seat use
- Business to implement employee seat belt programs and to join with other businesses and organizations to advance seat belt and child safety seat legislation, enforcement, and education
- Communities to seek leadership and participation from mayors, councils, boards, and other public officials, and to support traffic enforcement as one of their best investments in public safety
- Private citizens to buckle up every time and on every trip, and to properly secure every child in a vehicle in a child safety seat or seat belt -- in the back seat, the safest place for children

The goals, plans, and actions described in this report, if implemented by a broad base of individuals and groups, will increase proper seat belt and child safety seat use in America. The results will save lives, prevent injuries, and reduce the associated medical care costs of traffic crashes.

Individuals must take responsibility for themselves and for their child passengers by making certain everyone in the vehicle is properly buckled up – every time, every trip.



**U.S. Department of
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TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY RELEASES NATIONAL STRATEGY TO INCREASE SEAT BELT USE

*"If there is one thing we can do to save thousands of American lives,
it is to increase seat belt use nationwide."*

President Clinton, Dec. 28, 1996

Responding to President Clinton's call to increase the number of Americans using their seat belts, Transportation Secretary Rodney E. Slater today released a national strategy to bring U.S. seat belt use to 85 percent by the year 2000.

Secretary Slater was joined by five former Secretaries of Transportation -- Alan Boyd, Samuel Skinner, Andrew Card, William Coleman, Federico Peña -- and a broad coalition of leaders from government, safety organizations and business which have pledged to assist the effort to reduce deaths and injuries by increasing the use of seat belts.

"Last year more than 40,000 people died and another 3.4 million were injured on our nation's highways. Yet nearly a third of all Americans -- and an astonishing 40 percent of children -- don't use their seat belts today," said Secretary Slater. "By raising seat belt use to 85 percent, every year we will save more than 4,000 lives, prevent more than 100,000 injuries and save \$6.7 billion in related costs.

"As President Clinton said in his inaugural address, 'We need a new sense of responsibility for a new century. There is work to do, work that government alone cannot do,'" Secretary Slater said. "I invite everyone to take this responsibility seriously and join in the effort to increase seat belt use. Seat belts are the number one way to save lives, and that's why we want everyone to buckle up for life."

Recognizing the former secretaries, Slater said, "Each of you helped move the ball forward to dramatically reduce the number of fatalities and injuries on our highways over the last 30 years. Your legacy, particularly noteworthy as the Department of Transportation celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, has led us to declare a bold commitment to the safety of future generations of Americans."

--more--

Seat belt use nationwide increased rapidly from 14 percent 15 years ago to 68 percent in 1996, but has risen very slowly in recent years. However, six states (California, Hawaii, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon and Washington) have already increased seat belt use to 80 percent or greater, demonstrating that the goal is within reach.

Seat belt use in many other industrialized countries exceeds 85 percent. In Australia, Germany and Canada, seat belt use exceeds 90 percent.

In a December radio address, President Clinton asked all Americans to always wear seat belts as a first line of defense against injuries and fatalities and always to keep children aged 12 and under buckled in the back seat where they are safest. He directed the Secretary of Transportation to develop a plan to increase the use of seat belts nationwide.

The plan, developed by the department's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), has four elements:

- Build public-private partnerships to help America reach its potential of saving lives and preventing injuries through the use of seat belts and child safety seats;
- Expand well-coordinated effective public education programs;
- Ask the states to enact strong legislation for standard seat belt laws and strengthened child passenger safety laws; and
- Embrace active, high visibility law enforcement of seat belt laws.

Taking the first step to help achieve the seat belt use goal, President Clinton issued an executive order directing federal agencies to upgrade their transportation policies to ensure on-the-job seat belt use by employees and by examining ways to increase seat belt use by motorists in national parks areas and on defense installations. The executive order also will encourage federal government contractors and recipients of federal grants to institute on-the-job seat belt use policies and programs for employees.

The action today involves several other major efforts previously announced by the President. As part of his National Economic Crossroads Transportation Efficiency Act (NEXTEA) sent to Congress last month, he recommended \$124 million for incentive grants to states to improve occupant protection as well as more than \$1 billion in flexible safety funds that states could choose to use for seat belt enforcement and education programs. Additionally, as part of a comprehensive seat belt strategy, President Clinton will include in the NEXTEA legislation a requirement that states which have not reached the goal of 85 percent seat belt use by the year 2002, or have not passed a primary seat belt law, will have 1.5 percent of their federal highway funds redirected to existing safety programs. This amount would increase to 3 percent in subsequent years.

Under President Clinton's leadership, the department has improved the safety of motorists by developing a comprehensive strategy to preserve the benefits of air bags and decrease their potential hazard to children and at-risk adults. In addition, it has proposed an innovative, universal attachment system for child safety seats to make child seats more secure and easier to use.

According to NHTSA, one of the most effective ways of increasing seat belt use rates is to provide law enforcement officers primary seat belt use laws as enhanced tools for improving safety.

"President Clinton is taking the first step toward increasing seat belt use by requiring federal employees to use their seat belts while they work," Slater said. "The next step in our national strategy will be to seek similar commitments from state and local governments, national organizations, businesses, local communities, and most important, individual citizens. All can become partners in this effort to get America to buckle up so that together we can prevent many of the tragic, unnecessary deaths and injuries that result when people do not use child safety seats and seat belts."

Joining Secretary Slater at the podium was Reva Dowell of Rock Island, Ill., whose life was saved by her seat belt during an accident last December. "A pickup truck pulled out of a side road directly in front of me, and I hit it full force with the front end of my car. Pieces of my car were strewn everywhere," she stated. "Police and ambulance attendants all said it was because I had my seat belt on and the air bag inflated that my life was saved. People need to know that using the seat belt is just as important as the air bag."

Maryland State Police Col. David B. Mitchell, speaking for the International Association of Chiefs of Police in support of seat belt use, said, "The men and women of law enforcement across America are committed to saving lives, and we know the use of seat belts and child safety seats is of critical importance to our mission of keeping our citizens safe on our streets and highways."

Nancy Auer, M.D., president-elect of the American College of Emergency Physicians, also voiced strong support. "As an emergency physician, I know that seat belts and child safety seats work. Every time someone who is in a motor vehicle crash is properly belted, I know another life has been saved, a debilitating injury has been avoided, another family spared," she said. "We are pleased to join our partners to stop the epidemic of injuries caused by motor vehicle crashes. We plan to ask our members to work within their communities to educate their patients and the general public to support safety belt and child safety seat legislation."

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