



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

**STATEMENT OF
Cathy Chase, President, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
On the Release of the 2020 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws
Reserve Officers Association, Washington, D.C.
January 23, 2020**

Good morning. I am Cathy Chase, President of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates). Advocates is a coalition of public health, safety and consumer organizations, and insurance companies and agents working to advance safer vehicles; safer drivers, passengers and road users; and safer roads. Thank you for joining us here in Washington, D.C. and on the live webcast.

Today we are releasing our “2020 Focus on Safety: Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws” Report. With the start of a new decade, our clear vision is to eradicate the horrific death and injury toll occurring on our roadways. Every day, approximately 100 people are killed and nearly 7,500 more are injured in motor vehicle crashes. The emotional devastation inflicted on families from crashes also comes with a significant annual economic cost of \$242 billion. This results in each person living in the U.S. essentially paying a “crash tax” of a \$784 every year. The status quo is unacceptable. As state legislatures around the country convene, now is the time for attention, activism and action.

The 17th edition of our annual Report provides a roadmap to progress by evaluating the adoption of 16 lifesaving laws in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. The laws are organized under five issue areas: occupant protection; child passenger safety; graduated driver licensing (or “GDL”) laws for novice teen drivers; impaired driving; and, distracted driving. Our safety “report card” rates every state on each of these areas and gives an overall rating based on the total number of laws passed.

States are awarded a “green” overall rating if they are significantly advanced toward adopting the optimal laws defined in the Report. A state cannot achieve this distinction without a primary enforcement seat belt law covering both front and rear seat occupants. Only seven states and D.C. received a green rating, yet none have enacted all 16 recommended laws. A “yellow” rating is given to the 31 states which are in need of improvements. Twelve states were given the lowest “red” rating because they are dangerously behind in adoption of the recommended laws. The optimistic news is that last year nine states and D.C. enacted a total of 12 laws. However, nationwide, 395 optimal laws are still missing.

Lawmakers should take note that the public is acutely aware of problems plaguing our roadways and is strongly supportive of decisive action. In this regard, Advocates commissioned a public opinion poll conducted by ENGINE’S CARAVAN SURVEY which we are also revealing today. It finds an overwhelming majority, 90 percent, agree that states should pass laws prohibiting distracting activities when driving such as watching movies or playing video games. Fortified by this result, Advocates has been and will continue to be working in state legislatures to broaden texting bans to account for the range of distracting features available on mobile phones. Additionally, 80 percent of respondents expressed support for programs that award states grant

money for passing distracted driving laws, as now happens with drunk driving, child passenger safety and other issues. Clearly, the public understands that distracted driving is a major problem, and they want action taken.

The poll also explored public sentiment on the issue of drug-impaired driving, an emerging issue as more states move to legalize recreational marijuana use. A resounding 76 percent of those surveyed expressed concern about marijuana-impaired driving and supported better research and testing of technology to detect drug impairment. Advocates will continue our push to curb the incidences of drug-impaired driving by promoting actions including accelerating research to better understand the scope of the issue, improving data collection and analysis, verifying roadside testing technology, and determining a standard for marijuana impaired driving.

Before we turn to our speakers, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Advocates' staff who have spent countless hours compiling this report. A special thank you to Allison Kennedy who led the Roadmap project, as well as to Cathy Barzey, Pete Daniels, Lisa Drew, Tara Gill, Shaun Kildare, Peter Kurdock, Bill Bronrott and Kim Levinson. Thanks also to Jamie Douglas of Daylight for creating the Report cover. This comprehensive report is a true team effort requiring reviews of nearly a thousand state laws and legislation, government data and numerous studies and reports. It provides research-based solutions, including the need for proven driver assistance technology, such as automatic emergency braking, as standard equipment in all new vehicles. This is a momentous time in transportation history with break-through safety innovations entering the marketplace and the promises that autonomous vehicles may offer in the future. We are excited to kick off a new decade and intend our 2020 Vision to provide clarity and inspiration to elected officials about the path to improve road safety for all.

I'd now like to welcome our dynamic line up of speakers.

- Mary Jagim, past President of the Emergency Nurses Association and Consumer Vice Chair of Advocates' Board of Directors;
- Lee Fanshaw, Federal Government Affairs Director for American Family Insurance, and Insurance Co-Chair of Advocates' Board of Directors;
- Jennifer Weaver, an anti-distracted driving advocate;
- Commander Chris Olson from the Oro Valley, Arizona Police Department;
- And, Doctor Deanna Wathington, Executive Dean of the Petrock College of Health Sciences, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies at Bethune-Cookman University, and Executive Board Vice Chair of the American Public Health Association.

After each speaker has given their remarks, we will open up for questions from the media. If you are joining us on the webcast, there are instructions below the video viewer on how to submit a question. All materials, including the speaker statements, handouts and a recording of the webcast will be available on our website www.SafeRoads.org.

Thank you.



STATEMENT OF
Mary Jagim, MS, RN, CEN, FAEN
2001 President, Emergency Nurses Association
Consumer Vice Chair, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety Board of Directors
On the Release of the 2020 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws
Reserve Officers Association, Washington, D.C.
January 23, 2020

Good morning. I am pleased to be here with you all today. As a registered nurse with over three decades of experience in emergency nursing, healthcare leadership, public policy and healthcare consulting, I have dedicated my professional life to treating and preventing injuries.

While ER nurses are on the receiving end of caring for people after they have been injured, often from motor vehicle crashes, we also advocate for prevention. The 16 optimal laws in Advocates' Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws are precisely the types of recommendations nurses endorse to help prevent crashes and fatalities from happening or to reduce their severity. For example, when babies are born in hospitals or young children with injuries are tended to in ERs, often when they are discharged to go home, their mode of transportation is a family car. There are programs throughout the country encouraging proper child passenger seat use which are fortified with comprehensive laws based on research and data. Advocates' Roadmap report includes two vital child passenger safety laws: that babies be restrained in rear facing seats through age 2 or longer and that young children after reaching the maximum weight and height limit of a forward facing safety seat be placed in a booster seat that should be used until the child can properly use the vehicle's seat belt when the child reaches 57 inches in height and age eight.

Last year, Louisiana, Maine, Washington and the District of Columbia passed laws to better protect child passengers. Tremendous opportunity to enhance safety for children exists with 35 states still in need of a rear-facing through age two law, and 34 states and DC in need of an optimal booster seat law. Similarly, seat belt and all-rider motorcycle helmet laws, restrictions on teen driving, and impaired driving and anti-distracted driving laws all aim to prevent dangerous and even deadly behaviors. State lawmakers play a crucial role in prioritizing and passing these basic safety laws. The unfortunate news is that no state has enacted all 16 laws recommended in the Roadmap Report, but the good news is that this report provides a playbook for state elected officials to take action today.

I would now like to share with you which states have received the distinction of being on this year's "best" states list by achieving a green rating. Topping the list of best states is Rhode Island with 13 optimal laws adopted. Others in the "best" category, with between 12 and 10 laws, are the District of Columbia, Washington, Delaware, Maine, Oregon, California and Louisiana. We applaud these states for their efforts to improve highway safety.

Now for the “worst” states, all receiving a red rating for falling dangerously behind in the adoption of Advocates’ recommended laws. South Dakota has the fewest number of optimal laws at just two total. The other 11 states receiving a “red” rating this year are: Wyoming with only three laws, Missouri and Montana with four laws, Arizona and Ohio with five laws, and Florida, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Vermont and Virginia with six laws.

The goal of the issuance of this red rating is not to shame these states but rather to serve as a clarion call to action. Last session, my original home state of North Dakota considered a bill to require all-occupants to buckle up on every trip. While it passed the Senate, it was unfortunately defeated in the House. I urge our legislature to pursue this upgrade again when they reconvene in 2021. Every positive step that each legislature takes leads to the ultimate goal of this Report, all states getting the 16 laws on the books and attaining a green rating which will result in our Nation’s roads being safer for all families.

Thank you.



STATEMENT OF
Lee Fanshaw, Federal Government Affairs Director, American Family Insurance
Insurance Co-Chair, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
On the Release of the 2020 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws
Reserve Officers Association, Washington, D.C.
January 23, 2020

Good Morning. I am Lee Fanshaw, Federal Government Affairs Director for American Family Insurance and Insurance Co-Chair of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates). For more than 30 years, this unique and highly successful organization has united insurers and public health, consumer and safety experts in saving lives on our roads. Advocates continues to steadfastly pursue its mission of safer roads, safer cars, and safer drivers and passengers.

While significant progress has been made to reduce motor vehicle crashes, deaths, injuries and associated costs, unfortunately we still have a great deal more to do. American Family has always been and continues to be committed to working with our safety partners to reduce this unacceptable and preventable mortality toll. Fortunately, each year, Advocates issues their Roadmap Report to help us better protect all road users and keep families whole.

I would like to provide a high-level overview of the report's state law findings. States are lacking as few as three laws and as many as 14, with a total of 395 laws needing to be adopted.

- With nearly half of all crash fatalities involving a motorist who was not buckled up, still 31 states are missing an optimal seat belt law protecting all vehicle occupants in all seating positions.
- Laws requiring all motorcyclists to wear a helmet have been found to be the *only* strategy proven to effectively reduce motorcyclist fatalities. Yet, 31 states do not have this requirement.
- Protecting children in age- and size-appropriate child safety seats in the rear seat is a proven lifesaver. Unfortunately, 43 states have not enacted both optimal rear-facing until 2 or longer and booster seat components.
- Motor vehicle crashes are the number one killer of American teens, and graduated driver licensing (known as "GDL") laws that gradually introduce novice drivers to the complex driving task have shown positive results in reducing crashes. While every state has at least one GDL provision, no state has all six recommended elements of a comprehensive GDL law.
- Laws targeted at curbing impaired driving are essential to reducing the preventable toll of drunk driving crashes, which continue to claim over 10,000 lives each year. However, 27 states lack at least one vital impaired driving law.
- And, distracted driving is a plague on our roadways, but 20 states must still take action to help ensure all drivers remain focused – eyes and mind – on the road.

As legislative sessions get underway across the country, closing these safety gaps must be a top priority.

This year, Advocates' Roadmap Report also includes a special feature, "2020 Vision – Issues in Focus." This section discusses both emerging and persistent issues which if addressed would achieve meaningful, lasting reductions in crashes. They include:

- Developing solutions to the growing problem of drug-impaired driving. As Advocates' newly released public opinion poll demonstrates, more than three quarters of respondents are concerned about impaired driving caused by marijuana use. We must better understand the full scope of the threat drug-impaired driving poses on our roads in order to take effective action.
- Expanding the use of automated enforcement, a crucial tool to combat the deadly behaviors of speeding and red light running.
- Improving rear seat safety with belt reminders as well as detection and alert systems for children unknowingly left in a vehicle. These systems are readily available and urgently necessary.
- And, addressing the upward trend of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities with vehicle and infrastructure design improvements.

In conclusion, this report both identifies state law gaps and national challenges and provides proven safety solutions. We encourage elected officials throughout the country to use it as a guide, including in my home state of Wisconsin which is considering a child passenger safety upgrade. Take action now to make our roads safer for everyone.

Thank you.

STATEMENT OF
Jennifer Weaver, Anti-Distracted Driving Advocate
On the Release of the 2020 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws
Reserve Officers Association, Washington, D.C.
January 23, 2020

Good morning. My name is Jennifer Weaver. I am pleased to join you today as Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) releases the 17th edition of the Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws.

Distracted driving is a major public health problem on our Nation's roads. The use of mobile phones while driving can result in cognitive distraction that is as impairing as drunk driving. Studies have shown that crash risk can be as much as four times higher when a driver is using a mobile phone. In fact, sending or receiving a text message can cause a driver to divert their eyes from the road for an average of nearly five seconds. When traveling at 55 miles per hour, that's enough time to cover the length of an entire football field without your eyes on the road.

This dangerous action can have deadly consequences. In 2018, the latest year for which data is available, nearly three thousand people were killed and approximately 400,000 more were injured in crashes involving a distracted driver. Crashes in which at least one driver was identified as being distracted also impose an annual economic cost on society of approximately \$40 billion. And we know that these numbers don't paint the whole picture considering underreporting of these type of crashes.

More can and must be done to prevent distracted driving crashes. And let me be clear – these are not accidents. Distracted driving is preventable and there are known actions which can curb these needless tragedies. As Advocates' Roadmap shows, states across the country still have gaps in their distracted driving laws that must be closed. Five states are missing an optimal all-driver text messaging restriction, and 19 states need to enact an optimal cell phone restriction for novice teen drivers.

Additionally, as smart phone use continues to proliferate and the capabilities of phones expand, laws must be updated to account for these additional distracting features. Sending a Facebook message, uploading a photo to Instagram or watching TikToks takes your eyes off the road and your mind off the task of driving, similar to texting. Yet, many distracted driving laws were not written to account for these types of apps. States must revisit their laws and take action to prevent use of these new features. And, as Advocates' new public opinion poll shows, strong support exists for doing so. When asked if states should pass laws prohibiting distracting activities such as watching movies or playing video games, the support for doing so was consistent and clear at 90 percent.

At a time when multitasking and cell phone addiction have become the norm, no one thinks they will be the one to cause a distracted driving crash or even a fatality. No one gets into their car thinking, "I am going to answer a call or read a text while driving and kill someone as a consequence." However, I am here to tell you that it can happen to anyone and all it takes is a split-second decision to take your eyes off the road. On December 22, 2015, I was the at-fault

driver in a crash that resulted in a fatality. A car was stopped waiting to make a left-hand turn. While I don't have a recollection of the crash itself, it was determined by investigators that I was looking down at my phone when I rear-ended that car, pushing it into oncoming traffic. The occupant was pronounced dead at the scene.

A loved one was lost that day. A wonderful, vital member of a family no longer walks this Earth because of me. So many tragic consequences have come to bear because my eyes were not on the road for five seconds. I carry sorrow and guilt in my heart that I am not sure will ever be lifted. So, I join Advocates here today to share my story because I have made it my life's mission to educate about the dangers of distracted driving including the essential information in their Roadmap Report, and to urge all to put away your devices and stay focused on the responsibilities of driving.

Thank you.



STATEMENT OF
Commander Chris Olson, Oro Valley (AZ) Police Department
On the Release of the 2020 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws
Reserve Officers Association, Washington, D.C.
January 23, 2020

Good Morning. I am Commander Chris Olson of the Oro Valley Police Department. I am pleased to join my fellow panelists and our host, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), at today's event.

Having spent nearly three decades in law enforcement, I have experienced far too many tragedies on roads and highways that could and should have been prevented. Common crash causes including speeding, impairment and distraction afflict our streets and too often result in a needless loss of life or debilitating injury. As a law enforcement officer, my top priority is to protect and serve those in my community. This includes educating citizens on unsafe driving practices, ensuring compliance with traffic safety laws, and responding to crashes when they do occur. However, the ultimate goal is always to stop crashes from happening in the first place. That is why Advocates' *Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws* is so essential.

The laws identified in this report can be divided into two large categories: those vital to reducing injuries when a crash occurs which includes seat belts, motorcycle helmets and child restraints. And those crucial to preventing crashes, namely driver impairment, driver distraction and teen driver safety. Enactment and enforcement of impaired driving countermeasures, distracted driving restrictions and graduated driver licensing (GDL) programs have tremendous potential to deter dangerous and deadly driver behavior.

Drunk driving crashes continue to claim nearly 30 people every day on average – amounting to one person being killed approximately every 50 minutes. Policies including requiring all-offenders to use ignition interlock devices as well as child endangerment and open container laws are necessary to target this scourge on our roads. I am pleased that my home state of Arizona is one of the 23 states, along with DC, that has all three of these commonsense laws recommended by Advocates. They are key to stopping incidents of drinking and driving, which are estimated to exceed 300,000 each day.

Distracted driving is also a major problem. Last year, Arizona experienced a major victory and now receives credit in the Roadmap Report for an all-driver text messaging ban -- an effort that was more than a decade in the making and for which the legislature should be commended. Our new law will improve safety on Arizona roads by prohibiting all drivers from engaging in distracting activities including reading, writing or sending messages and also takes the important step of banning other applications including taking or viewing video.

Lastly, implementation of comprehensive GDL programs ensures teens are gradually introduced to driving privileges to keep them safe and improve the safety of all who share the roads with these novice drivers. For instance, data shows that driving at night or with other teens in the car are factors that lead to higher crash rates. Nighttime and passenger restrictions and other safeguards are necessary to address the fact that teen drivers lack driving experience, tend to take greater risks, and are far more likely than other drivers to be involved in fatal crashes. Despite GDL laws being proven lifesavers, nearly 200 gaps remain in teen GDL programs nationwide.

In my role with the Oro Valley Police Department, I always strive to meet the citizens I serve out in our community. Unfortunately, sometimes this happens roadside during a traffic stop. Nonetheless it still provides an opportunity to educate them about the importance of following all state and local laws for their own protection as well as their friends' and neighbors'. The last place I want to meet is at the scene of a crash or even worse, when I come to your door to inform you of a preventable tragedy. By ensuring the practical safety rules identified in Advocates' Roadmap Report are in place, we will get closer to our shared goal of eliminating crashes, deaths and injuries. Thank you.



STATEMENT OF
Dr. Deanna Wathington, MD, MPH, FAAFP
On the Release of the 2020 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws
Reserve Officers Association, Washington, D.C.
January 23, 2020

Good morning. I am Deanna Wathington, Executive Dean of Health Sciences and Graduate Studies Dean at Bethune-Cookman University. I also serve as Vice Chair on the Executive Board of the American Public Health Association (APHA). APHA works to advance the health of all people and all communities. Our 50,000 members represent professionals in all fields of public health. We are dedicated to making the United States the healthiest nation in one generation. To do so, we must address the dire state of safety on our roads.

As a physician, I have treated numerous illnesses and injuries, some incurred from motor vehicle crashes. Together with my patients we develop a treatment plan to recovery. I joined Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) here today because their Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws is akin to a treatment plan for the maladies happening on our roadways.

A major factor in surviving or dying in a car crash is whether an occupant is buckled up. Nearly 23,000 passenger vehicle occupants died in crashes in 2018, and where restraint use was known, nearly half of those killed were not wearing seat belts. Despite decades of research and education on the lifesaving benefits of seat belt use, people are still not buckling up. That is why it is critical for states to pass primary enforcement seat belt laws for all occupants. These laws have been proven to increase seat belt use, which saves lives and also saves states money in reduced crash costs including first responder and medical expenses. Yet, only 19 states and DC have primary enforcement seat belt laws that require every occupant to buckle up. We've got to do better.

Next, we know that motorcycles are the most hazardous form of motor vehicle transportation, and fatalities are on the rise, more than doubling to 4,985 since a low of 2,116 in 1997. Just as seat belt laws encourage safe behavior, all-rider helmet laws have been shown to be "the only strategy proven to be effective in reducing motorcyclist fatalities," according to the Government Accountability Office (GAO). The impact of an all-rider helmet law is clear - there were nine times as many unhelmeted fatalities (1,670) in states lacking this law in 2018, compared to states with a universal helmet law (177). In addition to saving lives, motorcycle helmets have been shown to reduce the risk of head injury by 69 percent. Yet, only 19 states and DC have all-rider helmet laws. For the sake of families and the communities that endure the physical, emotional and financial costs of devastating injuries, every state should have an all-rider helmet law requirement.

In addition to these protections which have been saving lives for decades, we are at a transformational time in transportation innovation with the availability of safety technologies in

vehicles to prevent or mitigate crashes. Systems such as automatic emergency braking (AEB), blind spot detection (BSD) and lane departure warning (LDW) have all been proven to significantly reduce crashes; however, they are often only available through luxury add-on packages or in high-end vehicles which many consumers cannot afford. Additionally, there are no minimum performance standards for them, so each one performs differently which can be confusing and hazardous to motorists and everyone sharing the roads with them. This is why we call on Congress to advance the Protecting Roadside First Responders Act (S. 2700/HR 4871), which will both put an end to tragic crashes involving law enforcement officers and first responders along the sides of our highways and improve safety for everyone on our roads by requiring proven driver assistance technologies in all new cars.

In conclusion, I would like to commend my home state of Florida for enacting a primary enforcement all-driver texting ban. However, we still find ourselves on the Worst States list with a “Red Rating” and need to build on this safety victory from last year. Thank you to Advocates for releasing this important report which I hope will inspire leaders throughout the country to assure basic protections that improve safety and save lives.

Thank you.