



**STATEMENT OF
Cathy Chase, President, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
On the Release of the 2021 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws
January 11, 2021**

Good morning. I am Cathy Chase, President of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates). Founded in 1989, Advocates is a successful and unique coalition of public health, safety, consumer and law enforcement organizations, and insurance companies and agents. Our efforts on the state, federal and regulatory levels seek to advance safer vehicles; safer drivers, passengers and road users; and safer roads. Thank you for joining us today for our virtual event to release the *2021 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws*.

A few housekeeping notes before I begin my remarks. This event is being recorded, is on the record, and closed captioning is provided. The recording, materials including the full *Roadmap Report*, speaker statements, and handouts can be found at our website: SafeRoads.org. Viewers may submit questions throughout the event using the link below the news conference video streaming on our website. Please include your name and affiliation. Questions will be answered at the conclusion of all the speakers' remarks, time permitted. If you would like to schedule an interview with one of our speakers, please contact our Communications Director Pete Daniels at pdaniels@saferoads.org.

Today, Advocates is proud to release the 18th edition of our annual *Roadmap Report* entitled [“Let’s Change This Picture in 2021.”](#) As our Nation continues to cope with the devastating, wide-ranging ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are offering this report to spur action to implement proven solutions to keep motorists and road users safe - and out of over-extended emergency rooms. I also would like to take this opportunity to convey our sincere gratitude to the medical community, including our Board members the Emergency Nurses Association, the American Public Health Association and Dr. Stephen Hargarten who is joining us today.

Unfortunately, instead of emptier streets leading to safer streets, our roadways have become reckless racetracks. Speeding, and impaired and distracted driving appear to have been more prevalent. And, basic protections like seat belt use decreased. This year’s *Roadmap Report* cover features just a few of the news stories from throughout the country that reported on this trend. Moreover, preliminary 2020 estimates show that while overall vehicle miles traveled are down, the fatality rate has jumped dramatically.

In 2019 alone, the latest year for which full data is available, 36,096 people were killed, and 2.7 million others were injured in motor vehicle crashes. The yearly price tag of the total societal cost imposed by all crashes is nearing one trillion dollars. When considering just the direct economic costs, each American is burdened with an annual “crash tax” of \$784. Historically, over the nearly two decades we’ve been publishing the *Roadmap Report*, nearly 600,000 people have been killed on our Nation’s roads and over 40 million more have been injured. This public health toll is significant, staggering, and deserving of serious attention and swift action.

Our *Roadmap Report* provides a plan of 16 traffic safety laws that have been demonstrated by research, data, and real-world experience to be effective. When looking at just a few of the issues the *Roadmap Report* covers – seat belts, child safety seats, and motorcycle helmets – nearly 16,000 lives are saved each year on average by their use. Thousands of additional lives would be saved annually if everyone used these basic safety protections. The *Roadmap Report* urges state legislatures to pass laws to that end, and when coupled with the additional proven actions we support, the lifesaving potential is even greater. As you can see on the screen, the laws fall under [five categories](#): occupant protection; child passenger safety; graduated driver licensing (or “GDL”) laws for novice teen and young adult drivers; impaired driving; and, distracted driving. The report rates each state for each category as “green,” “yellow,” or “red,” and gives an overall color rating, as well as an individual “report card” detailing the laws they have and the laws they are lacking.

Those states awarded the top rating of “green” 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. Eight states and D.C. received a green rating. A “yellow” rating is given to the 30 states which have adopted some laws and are in need of improvements. Twelve states were given the lowest “red” rating because they are dangerously behind in adoption of the recommended laws. No state has all 16 recommended laws and, overall, 390 laws are needed throughout the country, signaling ample opportunity for every state to make progress this year. We will be widely distributing the *Roadmap Report* in the states and will use it extensively throughout the year to support legislative efforts.

Advocates also looks forward to working with the recently-seated 117th Congress and the incoming Biden-Harris Administration on federal legislative and regulatory efforts to improve safety and complement our work in the states. Vehicle safety technologies, like automatic emergency braking, lane departure warning, and blind spot detection, are proven to prevent and mitigate a myriad of crash scenarios. A Consumer Reports analysis from June 2020 found that when totaled together, these and other “existing motor vehicle safety technology would save 16,800-20,500 lives per year if equipped across the full U.S. light-duty motor vehicle fleet. This totals approximately one-half of the 36,560 lives lost on U.S. roads in 2018.” We call on the new Congress and the incoming Administration to prioritize advancing these systems as required equipment on all new vehicles with a minimum performance standard. With these strategies, we firmly believe we can “change the picture” in 2021 and beyond.

Before I introduce our speakers, I would like to thank our Board of Directors for their support and acknowledge the Advocates’ team for their tireless efforts in the production of the report as well as today’s release event. The staff has adapted seamlessly to execute this event virtually and I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Allison Kennedy who led the Roadmap project, and to Tara Gill, Pete Daniels, Cathy Barzey, Lisa Drew, Shaun Kildare and Peter Kurdock, as well as Jackie Gillan, Bill Bronrott and Kim Levinson. Thanks also to Jamie Douglas of Daylight for creating the Report cover and the New Media Mill team for producing today’s webcast.

Now to introduce our dynamic panel.

- Alan Maness, Vice President of Federal Affairs and Counsel for State Farm Insurance Companies and Advocates’ Board of Directors Insurer Co-Chair;
- Former New York State Senator David Carlucci (D-NY) from the 38th District;
- Ivette Chaidez, Education Outreach Coordinator of Impact Teen Drivers;
- Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-IL) who represents the Eighth District of Illinois in the U.S. House of Representatives;
- New Jersey State Assemblyman Nicholas Chiaravallotti, who represents the state’s 31st District; and,
- Dr. Stephen W. Hargarten, a Professor of Emergency Medicine Affiliate Faculty of the Comprehensive Injury Center, an Associate Dean in the Office of Global Health at the Medical College of Wisconsin, and Advocates’ Board of Directors Consumer Co-Chair.

A reminder to please use the link under the webcast video at [SafeRoads.org](https://www.SafeRoads.org) to send questions and we will do our best to address them at the conclusion of the speakers’ remarks. Thank you.



STATEMENT OF
Alan Maness, Vice President of Federal Affairs and Counsel
State Farm Insurance Companies
Insurance Co-Chair, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
On the Release of the 2021 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws
January 11, 2021

Good morning. I am Alan Maness, Vice President of Federal Affairs and Counsel for State Farm Insurance. As the Nation's leading property casualty insurance company, State Farm is a proud founding Board Member of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates). This organization has a successful track record of more than three decades of bringing together insurance companies and consumer, public health, law enforcement and safety groups. Together we advance a shared mission of reducing crashes and preventing fatalities and injuries. Last fall, a cost/benefit report demonstrated that the work of this alliance has saved over 185,000 lives and \$1.6 trillion in crash costs. Many of these benefits are the result of laws and policies in the 2021 *Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws*. These accomplishments are remarkable, but there's still tremendous opportunity to improve roadway safety.

For nearly two decades, the *Roadmap Report* has served as an essential tool for state legislatures as they seek to identify safety gaps in their laws. Over that time, the report has evolved in response to new research and emerging trends. Advocates regularly analyzes and updates the criteria for the laws to continually hold states to optimal standards to maximize safety benefits. Throughout its history, the report's core value of serving as a catalyst to improve safety on our Nation's roads has remained crucial, coherent and consistent.

Last year as our Nation grappled with the horrific consequences of COVID-19, a number of states were still able to advance traffic safety laws to protect their motorists and other road users. I am honored to announce the resultant changes in ratings in the 2021 *Roadmap Report* that rank the states based on their protective state activity. First, New York has ascended to a "green" rating with 13 of the 16 laws, following enactment of a primary enforcement seat belt law for all passengers. Former Senator Carlucci will discuss this effort in greater detail. [As appearing on the screen](#), joining New York with a green rating are: Rhode Island, the District of Columbia, Washington state, Delaware, Maine, Oregon, California and Louisiana. To achieve this distinction is meeting a very high bar and we laud these states on this superb accomplishment.

Next, I would like to congratulate South Dakota for being the "most improved" state, following enactment of four new laws which elevated them from the status as the state with the fewest laws. While they still retain a "red" overall rating, their significant progress is to be commended. Other states, [shown here](#), receiving a red rating include Missouri, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona, Florida, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Ohio, Vermont and Virginia.

Additionally, considerable opportunity exists to advance available technologies in new vehicles. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (or "IIHS") has found that advanced driver assistance systems can bring about game-changing benefits [seen here](#). For example, forward collision warning with autobrake can reduce front-to-rear crashes with injury by 56 percent. This technology should be standard equipment, with a minimum performance requirement, on all new vehicles. **Moreover, IIHS [recently found](#) that alcohol-detection systems could save more than 9,000 lives each year.** State Farm and our insurance colleagues on Advocates' Board are proud to support federal legislation to ensure that all new cars are equipped with advanced impaired driving prevention technology. Working on a dual track to harness this technology and to support passage of the **impaired driving laws in the [Roadmap Report](#), namely** - ignition interlocks for all-offenders, open container, and child endangerment laws, can maximize protection for all road users. Additionally, while alcohol-impaired crashes remain a leading killer, as states move to legalize marijuana for recreational use, it will be imperative to address drug-impaired driving through funding for law enforcement, development of

roadside testing technology, and establishment of an impairment standard, recognizing current research does not support a *per se* level.

Thank you for joining us today.



STATEMENT OF
Ivette Chaidez, Education Outreach Coordinator
Impact Teen Drivers
On the Release of the 2021 Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws
January 11, 2021

Good morning. I am Ivette Chaidez, Education Outreach Coordinator for Impact Teen Drivers. I became an advocate for teen safe driving and unintentional injury prevention after my 17-year-old little sister, Itzy, became one of approximately 4,000 teens who lose their lives each year to reckless and distracted driving. Itzy was a fun-loving, outgoing, 17-year-old with her whole life ahead of her. She and I were extremely close; she was my best friend in the whole world. Itzy's personality was so big that she was friends with practically everyone she met and was the kind of person who you could count on to make you laugh when you were having a bad day. Itzy had big plans for her future. She had just started her senior year and was working towards graduating early so that she could start a Medical Assistant program. After that she wanted to go to college to become an RN. Itzy was truly a typical teenager, much like the teenagers in all our lives. She was not perfect, none of us are. She made good choices and sometimes she made bad choices, some of which ultimately cost her life.

On a typical Labor Day weekend, Itzy and her friends chose to take a trip to the beach. They met at a friend's house, loaded up the car and hit the road. 6 teens, 5-seater car, and only 4 working seatbelts. They made it to the beach and had a great day. On the way back from the beach Itzy was sitting on her friend's lap while they danced, sung along to their blaring music and had a grand old time, while their inexperienced friend who was driving sped along the highway. While they were singing and dancing along, the driver was distracted and missed their exit, which caused an argument between the driver and her boyfriend. While this was going on a tire blew and the driver slammed on her brakes, which caused the car to flip end over end. Itzy was not wearing a seatbelt, was ejected from the vehicle, and died on impact.

My life hasn't been the same since 8:55 pm that night. I miss my sister every single day. My family chose to share my sister's story to empower others to make better choices in a vehicle, whether they are a driver or passenger, so no other family must feel the same pain we do. Perhaps one of the most painful realizations was that these crashes are not sad, inevitable occurrences; they are 100 percent preventable. Had better choices been made by everyone in the vehicle my sister was a passenger in, she would still be here today. I couldn't go back and change what happened to my sister, but it became abundantly clear that I had to speak up and share my family's worst moment so that no other family has to go through the same pain. So, I advocate for making good choices behind the wheel using evidence-based strategies.

Car crashes are the number one killer of teens in the U.S. and result in the loss of approximately 11 teens each day. To address these preventable deaths involving novice drivers, all 50 states have implemented a Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) Law, which requires teens under the age of 18 to go through a 3-phase process to obtain their driver license. The objective of the GDL law is to minimize the highest risk situations (passengers, nighttime driving, and use of electronic devices) while novice drivers gain experience. The learner or permit stage requires a minimum number of months of adult-supervised

driving; the intermediate or provisional stage restricts teens from driving in high-risk situations for a specified period of time; and, once these two stages are complete, drivers become eligible to apply for full unrestricted driving privileges. In states that have adopted GDL programs, studies have found overall crash reductions among teen drivers of about 10 to 30 percent.

While this is GOOD news, we are still missing the mark in protecting older novice drivers ages 18-20 who are not required to go through the GDL process. Data shows these older novice drivers who avoid GDL have significantly higher crash rates than their counterparts who went through GDL, and this difference persists for up to 3 years. The difference between these sets of drivers? Experience. Data shows that experience is associated with fewer crashes for novice drivers of all ages. We'll be partnering with Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) and a strong coalition to support legislation to extend GDL to older novice teen drivers in California next session. We hope others watching today will join our efforts.

The Roadmap Report released today is a vital resource for states, policymakers, and advocates to gauge how their state is doing with regard to implementing evidence-based traffic safety practices, as well as determine strategies they can implement to strengthen their state laws and ultimately save lives. The Roadmap Report finds that there is tremendous opportunity for states to do so, and especially for GDL. No state has enacted all of the recommended GDL provisions and 15 states are still in the "red". I urge all states to prioritize making improvements to their GDL laws in 2021 and look forward to working with Impact Teen Drivers and Advocates to bring these efforts over the finish line. Thank you.

El Informe de Roadmap, lanzado hoy por Abogados para la Seguridad del Automóvil y la Carretera, estará disponible en su sitio web en saferoads.org. Este Informe es un recordatorio urgente que es muy importante usar siempre un cinturón de seguridad, dejar teléfonos mientras la conducción y nunca conducir ebrio. Los motociclistas deben usar un casco para protegerse mientras viajan. Si conduce con niños, siga las mejores prácticas de acuerdo con su edad y desarrollo para los sistemas de retención para niños, y si son menores de 13 años, siempre deben estar sentados y abrochados en un asiento trasero. Y, para los conductores adolescentes novatos que están en el proceso de aprender comportamientos de conducción segura de por vida, y sus padres, es importante conocer y seguir las leyes de su estado para la conducción segura, así como las mejores prácticas basadas en la investigación para este grupo de edad. A veces, las restricciones de los padres deben ser más estrictas que la ley estatal y críticas para la seguridad de los conductores novatos, especialmente si su estado no ha tomado las medidas recomendadas. Todos tenemos un papel que desempeñar para reducir las muertes evitables del tráfico. Gracias.



STATEMENT OF
Dr. Stephen Hargarten, MD, MPH
Professor of Emergency Medicine Affiliate Faculty, Comprehensive Injury Center
Associate Dean Office Global Health, Medical College of Wisconsin
Consumer Co-Chair, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
On the Release of the 2021 Roadmap Report of State Highway Safety Laws
January 11, 2021

Good morning. I am Stephen Hargarten, Professor in the Department of Emergency Medicine at the Medical College of Wisconsin. I am proud to be the Consumer Co-Chair of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety and am pleased to join you today as Advocates releases the 2021 *Roadmap of State Highway Safety Laws*.

Our Nation has faced extraordinary challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The public health and health care communities have responded with the tried-and-true approaches of prevention and mitigation, until mass immunization is achieved. Even after the vaccines are received throughout the country to all populations, prevention and mitigation will remain vital tools in our proverbial doctor bag. Similarly, this strategy needs to be applied to reduce the 36,000 preventable deaths annually as well as to flatten the curve on the motor vehicle crash fatality rate which is estimated to have spiked by approximately 18 percent over the first six months of 2020. The *Roadmap Report* provides specific and similarly tried-and-true policy solutions to achieve these goals.

For example, the report promotes the enactment of primary enforcement seat belt laws for all occupants. Without question, seat belts have saved hundreds of thousands of lives and prevented millions of injuries. Even still, **[30 states](#) do not have this critical proven law to increase use rates**. Additionally, it is long-established by experts that children are best protected when they are in a seat appropriate for their size and age. However, only seven states have both optimal child passenger safety laws recommended in the Roadmap report. And, the data is irrefutable that motorcycle helmets reduce serious head injuries and save lives. Sadly, in the medical profession, unhelmeted riders are referred to as organ donors. Yet, this year, ten states considered legislation to *repeal* their all-rider helmet law, and **Missouri removed its [52-year all-rider helmet law](#) to the peril of motorcyclists and the resultant health care costs to its taxpayers**.

Sometimes not properly buckling up or wearing a helmet will kill or injure a motorist, but *always* family members or other caretakers will be the ones dealing with the often life-long disabilities with intensive financial and emotional consequences.

This is why it's so important that the Report be used to guide state elected officials to close the dangerous and deadly gaps in their state laws. The ramifications are literally life or death.

Lastly, I am keenly aware of the demands placed on medical workers during these difficult times – overburdened hospitals, round-the-clock hours, and the heart-rendering decisions about allocation of medical equipment and supplies. We owe it to them to do everything we can to keep ourselves safe to stop further straining the health care system. A major part of that is preventing crashes and serious injuries. While lawmakers seek to contend with immediate needs resulting from COVID-19, so too should they prioritize the countermeasures in Advocates' *Roadmap Report* to reduce incidents that will only serve to compound the current public health and health care challenges.

Thank you.