



STATEMENT OF
Dr. Deanna Wathington, MD, MPH, FFAFP
in Support of the Reduce Impaired Driving For Everyone (RIDE) Act of 2021

Good afternoon. I am Dr. Deanna Wathington, Executive Board Chair of the American Public Health Association, and a member of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety's Board of Directors.

I want to thank Senator Ben Ray Luján and my home state Senator Rick Scott for their leadership in introducing the Reduce Impaired Driving for Everyone (RIDE) Act of 2021 and Congresswoman Debbie Dingell for her championing of the HALT Drunk Driving Act. I am also honored to join MADD National President Alex Otte and our fellow supporters of this legislation to urge Congress for its swift passage.

As a public health practitioner and family medicine physician, I have a deep and thorough understanding of the wide-ranging and long-lasting consequences of the killer that is impaired driving.

I also turn to science and data to base decisions. One of the most respected auto researchers, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS), has estimated that more than 9,000 lives could be saved every year if impairment detection technology that prevents drunk driving was widely deployed. IIHS also affirmed that the fastest route to ensuring the societal benefits of the technology is through federal regulation.

Just as doctors diagnose diseases and implement proven treatments, the RIDE Act pinpoints the cause of approximately 30 percent of traffic fatalities and requires a technological solution.

It takes the crucial and commonsense step of directing the U.S. Department of Transportation to require passive impaired driving prevention technology in new vehicles. By developing a minimum performance standard, the DOT will ensure that this lifesaving innovation functions as needed and ensures that its benefits will be experienced equitably.

As a nation, we can no longer accept that more than 10,000 people are being killed on our roadways every year by impaired drivers. A physician would never withhold medicine to treat a disease, and we cannot accept inaction on this legislation and allow innocent motorists and their families to suffer.

It's time for Congress to do its job and pass the RIDE Act this year.