



April 12, 2023

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Governor of North Dakota
Office of the Governor
600 East Boulevard Avenue
Bismark, North Dakota 58505-0001

Dear Governor Burgum:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) is an alliance of consumer, safety, law enforcement, medical and public health groups, and insurance companies and agents working to advance laws proven to prevent crashes, deaths and injuries on our roads and contain related costs. We applaud you for signing into law Senate Bill (SB) 2362, to establish a primary enforcement all-occupant seat belt law in North Dakota and for vetoing House Bill (HB) 1475 which would have raised the speed limit to 80 miles per hour (mph) on certain roads in the state. Your actions will save countless lives, and they are very timely.

In the first nine months of 2022, there were 80 motor vehicle crash-related fatalities in North Dakota.ⁱ Speeding and lack of seat belt use are major contributing factors to traffic fatalities. Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) reveal that in 2021, more than 50 percent of people killed in passenger vehicle crashes in North Dakota were not restrained at the time of the crash, when restraint use was known.ⁱⁱ Moreover, the percentage of those killed in speeding related crashes in the state increased from 24 percent (2020) to 29 percent (2021) of the total traffic fatalities.ⁱⁱⁱ

Traffic crashes are not only devastating to individuals and families, but they are also costly. In 2019, crashes in which at least one driver was speeding cost our nation more than \$46 billion in economic costs.^{iv} That year, lack of seat belt use cost society at least \$11 billion.^v The economic cost of motor vehicle crashes in North Dakota totaled \$735 million or \$965 per resident in 2019.^{vi}

Prioritizing the safety of North Dakotan families and visitors by signing SB 2362 into law and vetoing HB 1475 will prevent or mitigate the great harm that results from motor vehicle crashes. Your safety leadership is exemplary and we hope will serve as a model for all governors.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

cc: National Governors Association Chair Governor Phil Murphy and Executive Director Bill McBride

ⁱ National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2022, December). *Early estimate of motor vehicle traffic fatalities for the first 9 months (January–September) of 2022* (Crash•Stats Brief Statistical Summary, Report No. DOT HS 813 406). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

ⁱⁱ NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts North Dakota 2012 – 2021. Available here: <https://cdan.nhtsa.gov/stsi.htm#>

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^{iv} Blincoc, L., Miller, T., Wang, J.-S., Swedler, D., Coughlin, T., Lawrence, B., Guo, F., Klauer, S., & Dingus, T. (2022, December). *The economic and societal impact of motor vehicle crashes, 2019* (Report No. DOT HS 813 403). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

^v Blincoc, L., Miller, T., Wang, J.-S., Swedler, D., Coughlin, T., Lawrence, B., Guo, F., Klauer, S., & Dingus, T. (2022, December). *The economic and societal impact of motor vehicle crashes, 2019* (Report No. DOT HS 813 403). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

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