



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

SPEAKER BIOS

Press Conference to Release the 2025 *Roadmap to Safety* Report Thursday, December 5, 2024

Cathy Chase: Cathy Chase is President of Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates) where she plays a critical role in advancing safety laws, regulations and policy on occupant protection, impaired driving, teen driving, distracted driving, motor vehicle and commercial motor vehicle safety, and autonomous vehicles. Ms. Chase is frequently invited to testify before Congress and is featured regularly in national and local media outlets as an expert on proven solutions needed to reduce the high toll of motor vehicle crash fatalities and injuries in the U.S. She is a graduate of Rutgers College and received her J.D. from George Washington University Law School.

Jack Gillis: Jack Gillis is the former Executive Director and CEO of the Consumer Federation of America. He currently serves as the Consumer Co-Chair of Advocates' Board of Director and Board Chair at the Center for Auto Safety. A longtime consumer advocate, Mr. Gillis has authored, co-authored or edited 75 books including *The Car Book*. For a decade he was a consumer correspondent for NBC's *Today Show* and a columnist for *Good Housekeeping* and *Child Magazine*. His past roles include serving as the Executive Director of the Certified Automotive Parts Association and being a professor at the George Washington University's Graduate School of Government and Business Administration. Mr. Gillis is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and received his MBA from George Washington University.

Rep. Samantha Sencer-Mura: Representative Samantha Sencer-Mura (D) has represented District 63a in the Minnesota House of Representatives since 2023. She serves on four committees, including the Transportation Finance and Policy Committee. In 2024, Rep. Sencer-Mura sponsored House File (HF) 2098 to create a pilot program for speed safety cameras and red light cameras and House File (HF) 4649 to upgrade the child passenger safety law. Both measures were attached to larger bills and enacted into law. Rep. Sencer-Mura's dedication to the community comes from her roots as a Minneapolis native, and she is the first Japanese American to be elected to the Minnesota legislature. Rep. Sencer-Mura is a graduate of Occidental College and has a M.E. in school leadership from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Tasha Hairston-Springs: After a serious crash in 2012 due to her texting while driving, Ms. Hairston-Springs has fought for upgraded distracted driving laws before the North Carolina legislature. She also founded Mindfully Aware Driving Solutions, a program that works to

change behaviors that lead to distracted driving. She travels the state sharing her story to inspire others to stay focused on the task of driving. Additionally, she is the Advocacy and Outreach Director at the African American Women Trucking Association. Ms. Hairston-Springs is a graduate of Southern New Hampshire University.

Rich Leotta: Rich Leotta has been fighting against drunk driving since his son, Officer Noah Leotta, a Montgomery County, Maryland police officer, tragically lost his life after being struck by an impaired driver while conducting a traffic stop with another suspected drunk driver in 2015. Mr. Leotta created the Officer Noah Leotta Foundation to reduce drunk driving, support victims and provide safety and educational content. He led the fight to pass “Noah’s Law” to require ignition interlock devices (IID) for drunk driving offenders in Maryland in 2016, and then worked to strengthen the law which was accomplished this year. In addition to his efforts in Annapolis, Mr. Leotta is active in advocating for federal legislation including the END DWI Act.

Lt. Colonel Joshua Downing: Lt. Colonel Downing started his career at the Colorado State Patrol in 1998. He has played a critical role in the advancement of technology, policy, training and accreditation for the Colorado State Patrol. Outside of the patrol he is a member of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) Roadway Safety Committee and the Chair of the Colorado Task Force for Drunk and Impaired Driving. Lt. Colonel Downing was recognized with the Citizens Appreciate State Troopers (C.A.S.T.) Award in 2002 and a Distinguished Service Award in 2020. He is a graduate of Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, CO.

Matt Gannon: Matt Gannon is the Head of Federal Affairs for Farmers Insurance and the Insurer Co-Chair of Advocates’ Board of Directors. Previously, Mr. Gannon was Assistant Vice President, Federal Affairs at National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC) and a lobbyist for the American Financial Services Association. He is a graduate of James Madison University and has an MBA from Georgetown University.