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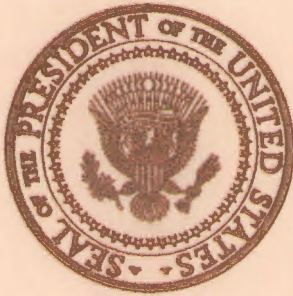
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National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week, 1985

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Motorists who drive while impaired by alcohol or other drugs are one of our Nation's most serious public health and safety problems. Each year, drunk drivers account for tens of thousands of highway fatalities and hundreds of thousands of injuries.

This needless carnage on our streets and highways can be reduced through increased public awareness and a willingness to take the necessary steps to prevent it. We must not wait until personal tragedy strikes to become involved.

Strict law enforcement and just penalties are essential. Contrary to popular opinion, driving is not a right, but a privilege that can and should be withdrawn when a drunken or drugged driver endangers others. We also need to develop better means of detecting these drivers and getting them off the road before they cause an accident.

Statistics show that a disproportionate number of our young people are involved in accidents in which alcohol and drugs are a contributing factor. In recognition of the considerable evidence that such accidents can be drastically reduced by raising the legal drinking age, the Federal government is encouraging each State to establish 21 as the minimum age at which individuals may purchase, possess, or consume alcoholic beverages. Many States have already raised the legal drinking age, as a result of efforts of dedicated citizen volunteers and the growing awareness that motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of death among young people. States that have not raised their legal drinking age should review these developments carefully.

We need informed, concerned citizens who are willing to help generate awareness; we need education and action to eliminate drunk and drugged drivers from our highways. With the continued involvement of private citizens and action at all levels of government, we can control the problem of drunken and drugged driving.

In line with the recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving, we have embarked on a long-term sustained effort to focus the resources of our local, State, and Federal governments on this problem.

In order to encourage citizen involvement in prevention efforts and to increase awareness of the seriousness of the threat, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 137, has designated the week of December 15 through December 21, 1985, as "National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of December 15 through December 21, 1985, as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week. I call upon each American to help make the difference between the needless tragedy of alcohol- and drug-related accidents and the blessings of health and life. I ask all Americans to take this message to heart and to urge others not to drive if they are under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan