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National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Driving impaired by alcohol or other drugs is 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 senseless carnage on our highways can be reduced through increased awareness of what can be done and a willingness to get involved in doing the right thing. We must not wait until personal tragedy strikes to become involved. It is too late for those who have already become the victims of the drunk drivers.

Strict law enforcement and just penalties are essential. Contrary to popular opinion, driving is not a right, but a privilege—which can and should be withdrawn when a drunken driver deliberately endangers others. We also need improved means of detecting intoxicated drivers before they cause an accident.

Statistics show that in many alcohol-related accidents, our young people are either the cause or the victim. In recognition of the considerable evidence that raising the legal drinking age reduces alcohol-related motor vehicle crash involvement among young drivers, 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.

We need informed, concerned citizens who are willing to get involved in generating awareness, education, and action to eliminate drunk and drugged drivers from our highways. With the continued involvement of private citizens working together, and action at all levels of government, we can begin to control the problem of drunken and drugged driving.

As the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving recommended, we are seeking a long-term sustained effort that brings to bear the resources of our local, State and national levels of government. To that end, a National Commission on Drunk Driving has been formed to continue the work of the Presidential Commission.

In order to encourage citizen involvement in prevention efforts and to increase awareness of the seriousness of the threat to our lives and safety, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 303, has designated the week of December 9 through 15, 1984, 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 9 through 15, 1984, as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week. I call upon each American to help make the difference between the needless tragedy of alcohol-related accidents and the blessings of health and life. I ask all Americans to remember and to urge others not to drink or take drugs and drive.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and ninth.

Ronald Reagan