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Last Updated: 05/23/2023



National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week, 1988

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The holiday season is a most fitting time to reemphasize that driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs is dangerous and irresponsible behavior that no one should engage in, tolerate, or permit.

Again this year, citizens across our Nation are volunteering their time and talents to take part in a week of observance to focus public attention on eliminating drunk and drugged driving. Public officials at all levels have issued proclamations, sponsored legislation, and appointed task forces; law enforcement agencies have increased enforcement efforts; public and private organizations have held safety campaigns; and citizens have sponsored programs to provide rides home from holiday parties. Actions like these bring us closer to the day when drunk and drugged drivers will no longer threaten our lives and our families.

We can take heart from the results of the comprehensive year-round activities to stop drunk driving. In 1987, the proportion of motor vehicle fatalities in which at least one driver or pedestrian was legally intoxicated was 40 percent. That figure is down from 46.3 percent in 1982. Another significant achievement was among intoxicated teenage drivers, whose involvement in fatal crashes declined to 18.7 percent in 1987, down from 21 percent in 1986 and 28.4 percent in 1982.

These notable gains give us hope and even more reason to redouble our efforts to stop drunk and drugged driving. This is no time for complacency.

We must also realize that combining drugs and alcohol adds to the risk. Studies of drivers involved in accidents reveal that many use drugs—and that certain drugs, either alone or in combination with alcohol, contribute to crashes. We must all be aware of the safety risks of driving after taking drugs, including prescription and over-the-counter drugs that carry a warning label against driving.

We can all help improve safety on our roads and highways by refusing to tolerate drunk and drugged driving; by always wearing safety belts, even for short drives; and by insisting upon prompt and effective action against alcohol- and drug-impaired drivers.

To encourage citizen involvement in prevention efforts and to increase awareness of the threat to our lives and safety, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 332, has designated the week of December 11 through December 17, 1988, as "National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 11 through December 17, 1988, as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week. I ask all Americans to show concern and not to drink or take drugs and drive or to permit others to do so. I also call upon public officials at all levels and interested citizens and groups to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities in reaffirmation of our refusal to tolerate drunk and drugged driving.

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

Ronald Reagan