



MADD

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Alcohol-Related Traffic Fatalities on the Rise

For Third Consecutive Year

In 2002, the nation experienced – for the third year in a row – an increase in alcohol-related traffic fatalities. Preliminary data show that at least 17,970 people were killed in crashes involving alcohol – representing 42 percent of the 42,850 people killed in all traffic crashes, up from 41 percent in 2001.

Crash Facts

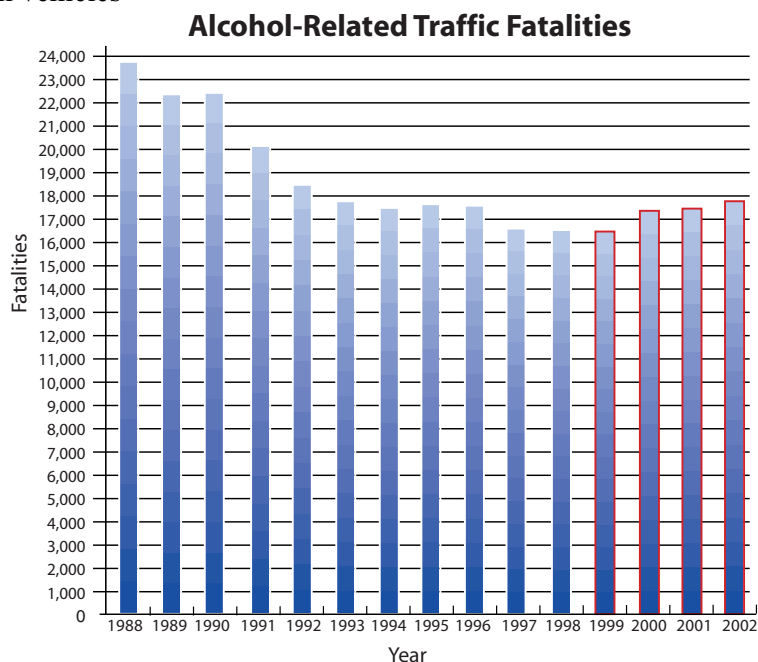
- ◆ Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for Americans ages 1 to 35 years old
- ◆ On average, 117 people die each day from motor vehicle crashes in the United States
- ◆ Traffic crashes cost America more than \$230 billion annually according to the U.S. Department of Transportation
- ◆ Forty-two percent of all traffic deaths are alcohol-related
- ◆ Sobriety checkpoints reduce crashes involving alcohol by 20 percent according to the Centers for Disease Control
- ◆ About one-third of all drivers arrested or convicted of driving while intoxicated are repeat offenders
- ◆ Seat belts reduce the risk of fatal injury by 45 percent and reduce the risk of serious injury by 50 percent

Put Research into Practice: TEA-21 and Traffic Safety

Reauthorizing TEA-21 Presents a Historic Opportunity to Reduce Alcohol-Related Traffic Deaths and Injuries

Mothers Against Drunk Driving's (MADD) goal for the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) is to advance traffic safety programs that will save lives and prevent injuries. Progress will occur when: 1) adequate funding is provided for traffic safety programs, and 2) a commitment is made to put proven countermeasures into practice. MADD believes the reauthorized traffic safety section of TEA-21 should:

- ◆ Establish a *National Traffic Safety Fund* to support state and national traffic safety programs, enforcement and data improvements
- ◆ Increase accountability for expenditure of federal funds
- ◆ Expand impaired driving and seat belt law enforcement mobilizations
- ◆ Enact a national standard to reduce repeat DWI and other higher-risk driver recidivism
- ◆ Enact a national primary seat belt standard
- ◆ Enact a national standard banning open containers of alcoholic beverages in vehicles



Reductions in alcohol-related fatalities have stalled since the early 1990s

Graph courtesy of National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Accountability...

Linking Results with Funding

While the nation experienced a substantial decrease in alcohol-related deaths in the 1980s and early 1990s, the U.S. is now experiencing an upward trend. This is due to inadequate funding, public complacency and the lack of coordinated plans of action at the state and federal levels.

Congress must hold states and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) accountable for the expenditure of federal highway safety funds. To reduce traffic fatalities, states must work in cooperation with NHTSA to develop strategic highway safety plans that establish goals and evaluation measures for funded

programs. NHTSA must have and exercise the authority to approve state highway safety plans — conducting meaningful reviews and requiring these plans to include effective impaired driving countermeasures that meet federal policy goals.

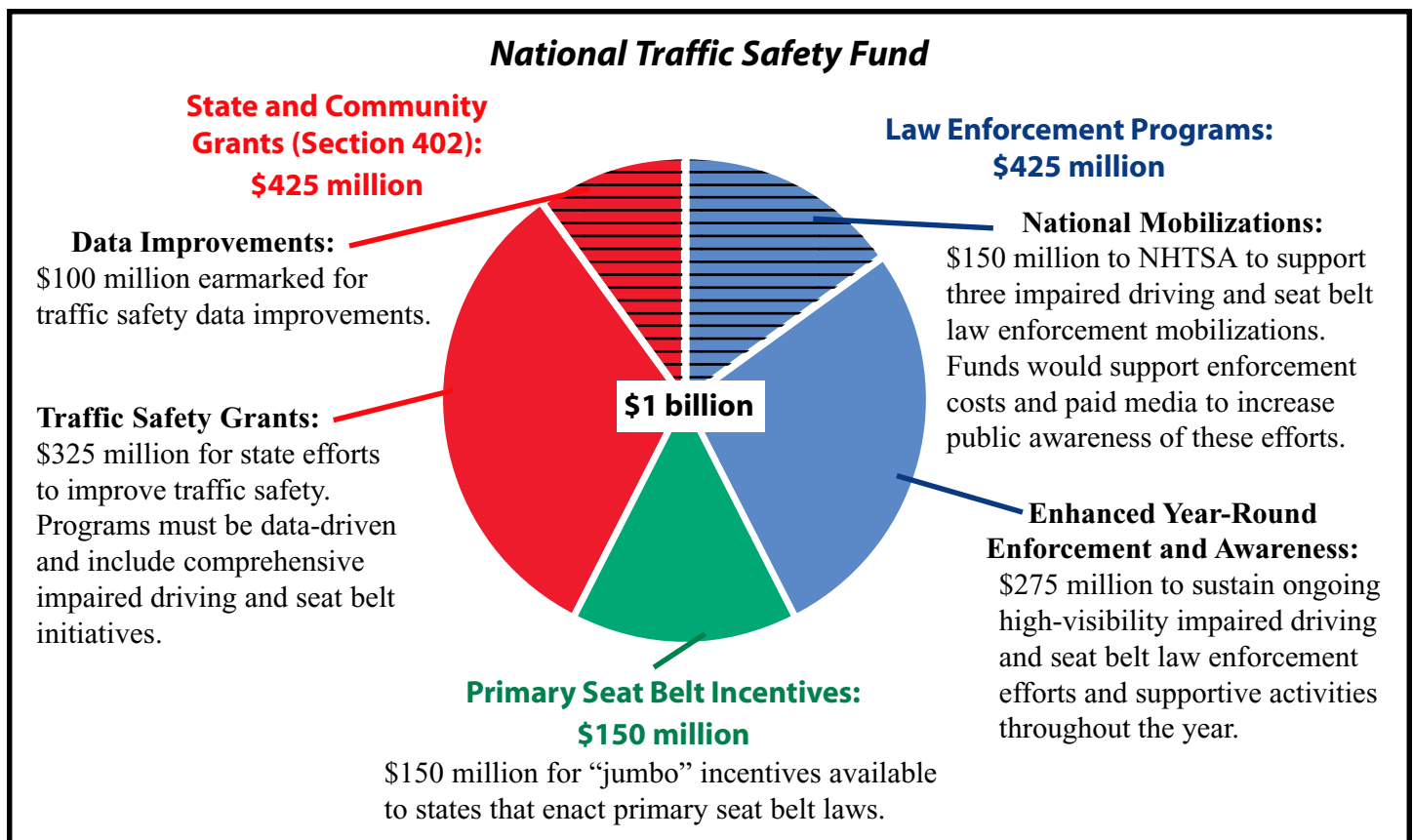
Research demonstrates that initiatives such as sobriety checkpoints and aggressive seat belt enforcement significantly reduce traffic deaths and injuries. MADD believes that these strategies must be the cornerstone for the reauthorization of the TEA-21 traffic safety section.



Traffic Safety Funding: Dedicating Dollars For Programs That Work

In 2001, federal funding for traffic safety programs was approximately \$522 million — less than one quarter of one percent of what traffic crashes cost Americans each year. Of the \$522 million, only \$133 million (26 percent) was spent on alcohol-related countermeasures.

MADD recommends establishing a \$1 billion dedicated *National Traffic Safety Fund* to provide increased, on-going resources for priority traffic safety programs. It has been estimated that for every dollar spent on effective highway safety programs about \$30 is saved by society in the reduced costs of crashes.



State and Community Highway Safety Grants (Section 402)

Section 402 funding must be significantly increased. However, states must be held accountable for the expenditure of these funds to ensure that they are spent on effective traffic safety programs. These programs must be based on problem identification and reflect data-driven priorities.

Key Action Items:

- ◆ Create three levels of accountability for performance: NHTSA, NHTSA Regional Administrators, state highway safety offices
- ◆ Require strengthened NHTSA approval process of state highway safety plans, requiring a strong correlation between problem identification, strategy, program selection and funding
- ◆ Require Improvement Plan implementation for states with poor performance
- ◆ Priority programming must include comprehensive alcohol-impaired driving countermeasures and seat belt initiatives
- ◆ Dedicate \$100 million annually for state data improvements
- ◆ Require increased funding for Law Enforcement Liaisons to better coordinate state and national law enforcement efforts



Law Enforcement Resources and National Mobilizations

Law enforcement is the front line in the fight against impaired driving. Traffic safety laws must be consistently enforced and the public must be educated about the consequences of noncompliance. Law enforcement needs more resources from the federal government in order to strengthen traffic safety enforcement efforts. Funding is needed for officer training, technology and equipment, overtime and the deployment of aggressive enforcement strategies.

Law enforcement needs more resources from the federal government.

MADD recommends dedicated funding to carry out high-visibility traffic law enforcement campaigns. These campaigns combine targeted enforcement — sobriety checkpoints, saturation patrols and/or seat belt enforcement — with the purchase of advertising in broadcast or print media. These campaigns will focus on reducing drunk driving and increasing seat belt use.

Key Action Items:

- ✓ Provide \$275 million to sustain ongoing high-visibility law enforcement efforts and supportive activities throughout the year. \$165 million would be dedicated to impaired driving enforcement and \$110 million would be dedicated to seat belt enforcement. These funds may be used for enforcement-related expenses including training, technology, equipment, overtime and media support.
- ✓ Dedicate \$150 million to NHTSA to support three national law enforcement mobilizations focusing on reducing impaired driving and increasing seat belt use. Funds would support enforcement costs and paid media to increase public awareness of these efforts.

Priority Traffic Safety Laws

Higher-Risk Driver Standard

Higher-risk drivers fall into three categories: repeat offenders, offenders with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .15 or higher, or offenders convicted of driving on a suspended license when the suspension was the result of driving under the influence. Nationally, one-third of all drivers arrested or convicted of driving while intoxicated are repeat offenders and in 2000, 58 percent of the alcohol-related traffic fatalities involved drivers with a BAC of .15 or above. A national standard must be enacted to ensure that higher-risk drivers are subject to consistent and aggressive detection, arrest and prosecution.

Key Action Items:

- ◆ Restrict vehicle operation by suspending licenses, impounding or immobilizing vehicles and requiring alcohol ignition interlock devices on offenders' vehicles.
- ◆ Require compensation to the community through fines, mandatory incarceration and financial restitution to crash victims.
- ◆ Promote recovery programs through mandatory alcohol assessment and treatment, intensive probation and attendance at victim impact panels.
- ◆ States that do not enact the national higher-risk driver standard would face the loss of highway construction funds.

Primary Seat Belt Standard

The best defense against an impaired driver is a seat belt. According to NHTSA, for every percentage point increase in seat belt usage, 280 lives can be saved.

Key Action Item:

- ◆ Establish a national primary seat belt standard. States would be eligible for "jumbo" financial incentives for three years. States that have not enacted a primary seat belt standard after three years would face the loss of highway construction funds.



Open Container Standard

Open container laws separate the consumption of alcohol from the operation of a vehicle. A common-sense measure, banning open containers in the passenger compartment of a vehicle will decrease the likelihood that drinking and driving will occur.

Key Action Item:

- ◆ Enact a national ban on open containers in the passenger compartment of motor vehicles. States that do not enact a ban on open containers would face the loss of highway construction funds.

.08 BAC Standard

Since the passage of the national .08 per se BAC standard in 2000, 18 states have passed this important legislation, bringing the total number of states in compliance to 38 and the District of Columbia (as of early May 2003).

Key Action Items:

- ◆ MADD will continue to work to ensure .08 BAC is the standard in every state.
- ◆ MADD will vigorously oppose any attempt to repeal the national .08 BAC standard.



Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) is a 501(c) (3) non-profit grass roots organization with more than 600 chapters nationwide.

MADD's mission is to stop drunk driving, support the victims of this violent crime, and prevent underage drinking.

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For additional information on MADD's priorities for the reauthorization of TEA-21, please contact:

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