



Monthly Report – July 2015 -- Vol. 3, No. 7 – ISSN 2332-063X

Dangers, Calls for Help, & Responses

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Dangers for Decades – Past, Present, Future

Since 1900 the number of people who have died of motor vehicle injuries now exceeds 3,673, 000 people in the U.S.A. The number injured now is estimated to exceed 800 million in America. [1]

Presently, the number dying amounts to nearly 100 people per day. The number seriously injured amounts to about 400 people per day. [2] Serious injuries include brain, spinal cord, amputations, burns, and disfigurements.

DOT values priceless losses at about \$2 billion per day in the U.S.A. today.

Since the year 2000, more than half (about 56%) of all Americans who die of their crash injuries die without transport to **any** facility (not even the closest local hospital), for emergency medical care. These people do not receive timely optimal emergency medical care at a trauma center with the expertise and equipment to properly diagnose and treat them and give them a chance at recovery from their injuries.

Of the remaining 44% who die, die after being transported to **some** facility for care – NHTSA does not count whether it was a Level 1 Trauma Center for optimal care or a local clinic – year after year after year. Many of these people died because emergency medical care was too little, too late. [3]

American Tragedies Without End

The future currently is clearly a continuation of tragedies -- without end.

Our Federal government still does not have a Vision Zero national goal and plan to end motor vehicle deaths and injuries - unlike Sweden which has a crash fatality rate lower than any State either in the U.S.A. or Europe. And this at a time in the history of humankind, when there is more scientific knowledge and technology to achieve an end to violent human tragedies before, during, and after a crash. Why?

NHTSA remains a captive agency with a greased revolving door, former officials now in industry and former industry people now in key agency positions. The ever-present lure of lucrative employment by industry has deadening effects on government policies, practices, and people. [4]

With 60 million vehicles recalled in just the year 2014, and most still unrepaired, all Americans continue to be in clear and present danger of future deaths, injuries, disabilities, and devastating losses. [5]

Examples:

Takata: *“Mr. Leopold represents Patricia Mincey, who was paralyzed from the neck down after the Takata airbag in her 2001 [Honda Civic](#) inflated forcefully following a low-speed collision in June 2014.”* [6]

Chrysler: Clarence Ditlow notes recent defect tragedies: *“People die when manufacturers fail to remedy recalled vehicles. On November 11, 2014, Kayla White burned to death in a rear impact in her 2003 Jeep Liberty. Kayla was 8 months pregnant and had tried to get Fiat Chrysler to install the trailer hitch before the fatal crash. There have been at least 20 deaths in the recalled Jeeps since NHTSA recall request on June 3, 2013.”* [7]

AP reports *“Todd Anderson of Connecticut, who lost his 17-year-old son when the family's 1998 Jeep Grand Cherokee was rear-ended and exploded in flames, asked the agency to order Fiat Chrysler to buy back the recalled Jeeps to get them off the road.*

Anderson said the crash that killed Skyler Justice Anderson-Coughlin happened in November of 2013, five months after the Jeep recall was announced. He was unaware of the recall until getting a notice in the mail from Fiat Chrysler the following May or June and said the notice should have been sent sooner. [8]

Byron Bloch's NHTSA testimony shows a long history of burn deaths [9]

GM: Laura Christian, mother of a daughter killed in a defective GM vehicle crash, notes in an Op – Ed in Roll Call that as of July 7, 2015, the death toll had risen from 13 to 117. [10]

How Many More Deaths, Injuries, and Losses?

The losses we currently can expect before Election Day 2016 amount to:

- 50,000 more Motor Vehicle fatalities
- 200,000 more serious crash injuries
- \$1 trillion more comprehensive losses [11]

Political Responses – Too Little, Too Late, For Too Many Americans

Crash victims are Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. Yet all Americans are currently living and dying in a political deadly divide. Senators from Red States are politically blocking safety progress. Yet under this deadly divide, more people died (14,013) in Red States than died (9,284) in Blue States in 2013. The number that died in Mixed States (one Republican Senator and one Democrat or Independent) was 9,422 people in 2013. [12]

Safety advocates are trying to bridge this political deadly divide amidst a tsunami of electoral cash:

“The Democratic and Republican Members of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee have two distinctly different visions for protecting the health and safety of American families on our roads and highways. For the first time in a quarter century, Members of the Senate Commerce Committee introduced partisan safety bills to be rolled into the overall surface transportation reauthorization bill. Unfortunately, the bills take very different approaches to addressing the unfinished safety agenda, with the Democratic bills, the Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 2015 (S. 1743) and the Truck Safety Act (S. 1739) advancing much needed safety reforms and the Republican bill, The Comprehensive Transportation and Consumer Protection Act of 2015 (S. 1732), maintaining the status quo and favoring corporate special interests. With the rising death and injury toll on our roads and highways due to large truck crashes and the record recall in 2014 of 60 million vehicles nationwide for safety defects involving over 125 deaths and hundreds of injuries, now is not the time to put the brakes on overdue safety improvements or jeopardize public safety by running in reverse.” [13]

Hopefully, an unstoppable left/right coalition will march across this bridge and safety and sanity will prevail - sooner rather than later.

Data on crash deaths by Congressional District for the years 2002 – 2011 are available to help this march succeed. [14]

References:

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13. Op cit, [July 10, 2015 Joint Statement](#)
14. <http://www.careforcrashvictims.com/CrashDeathMappingTools.php>