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Citizens Race To Stop Crash Deaths in a Decade

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New Hope for Progress in Auto Safety – Less Corruption & More Leadership

In 2014, there is new hope for citizen power to reduce crash deaths.

Ralph Nader recently wrote: *“Of all the ideas presented in The Seventeen Solutions, none is more important, more ignored, and less expensive than the need to shift power back to the people, to give every American the tools of democracy and access to justice.”*

Less corruption - In 2014, citizens gained a little hope because NHTSA Administrator Strickland and Secretary LaHood have now left through the DOT NHTSA “Revolving Door.” Reality check: NHTSA and DOT are still captive agencies with many powerful positions still filled with corporate servants rather than public servants.

The LA Times’ Michael Hiltzik has looked at the Revolving Door problem and asked a most important question of life, death, or disability: "what's the ordinary person to do?"

"Government can't pay young staff members or even top officials enough to keep them from seeking higher salaries in the private sector. Only oversight by a Congress and president truly devoted to the public interest, not commercial interests, can keep regulatory agencies focused on the people's business.

But when business gets its say on Capitol Hill and the White House too, what's the ordinary person to do?" See

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-hiltzik-20140126,0,1425489.column#ixzz2rXH9c6sH>

More Moral and Better Leadership -

NYC has a new Mayor Bill de Blasio. Mayor de Blasio already has done what President Obama failed to do in 5 years in office as President – set a decent crash safety goal.

Under President Obama, DOT Secretary Ray LaHood, and NHTSA Administrator David L. Strickland, Americans suffered tens of thousands more deaths due to crash injuries – **more than 160,000 people** - than the number of Americans who died in the Afghanistan, Iraq, Viet Nam, and Korean wars combined.

Now Mayor de Blasio has set a goal to eliminate traffic deaths in NYC to zero by 2024.

The NY Times reports “*Only two weeks into his administration, Mr. de Blasio set a sweeping goal on Wednesday: to bring the number of New Yorkers killed in traffic “literally” to zero, saying it would be “a central focus” of his administration.*”

Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/16/nyregion/de-blasio-announces-steps-to-reduce-traffic-deaths.html>

NYC citizens are organizing to advocate for progress in meeting this goal. See

<http://www.rightofway.org/VisionZeroClock/pressrelease.html>

And as of this writing the Citizens’ Vision Zero Clock shows deaths in 2014 are down in NYC. See <http://www.rightofway.org/VisionZeroClock/>

National Problem -- Nationally the total number of crash deaths in the U.S.A. since 1900 now exceeds 3,623,000 people. The number injured in crashes is estimated to be approaching 500,000,000. Thus crashes in the U.S. have resulted in 5 times the number of Americans killed and 300 times the number wounded in all wars since 1776. See <http://www.careforcrashvictims.com/clock.php>

Currently **each day**, about 100 Americans die of crash injuries, 400 suffer serious injuries, and losses increase by about \$1 Billion. The U.S. government does not count the number of specific serious injuries such as brain, spinal cord, burns, amputations, disfigurements or the long-term consequences of these tragic human losses.

In 2011, more than half (56%) of the 32,376 fatal crash victims were not taken to any facility for emergency medical treatment -- 17,972 crash fatalities died without any hospital medical care. See <http://www.careforcrashvictims.com/assets/2012-00872-FATALITIES.PDF>

In 2013, the National Academy of Sciences reported that the U.S. ranks last in mortality from transportation injuries. “*In 2009, the United States had the highest death rate from transportation related accidents among the 17 peer countries...*” See *Shorter Lives, Poorer Health*, p. 32, available at http://nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13497

Local Problem – Crash Deaths in our major cities are a major problem. Below is a partial NHTSA list of crash deaths by city in the year 2011. Note that NYC had the highest number of crash deaths -- 271 people killed -- of any city in the U.S. in 2011. Los Angeles was next worst with 209 crash deaths. In NYC during 2012, the number of people who died of crash injuries totaled 268 people --and in LA another 242 people died of crash injuries. All NHTSA data by cities from 2000 – 2012 are under my web site tab of Crash Death Mapping Tools. See http://www.careforcrashvictims.com/assets/CITY_FATRATE_A.PDF

Solutions – What Citizens Can Do To Stop Crash Deaths in a Decade

In 2014, we have new opportunities and responsibilities to develop initiatives to save lives. First, we now have the inspiration of mayor de Blasio’s leadership commitment to a Vision Zero Goal for NYC by 2024. Second, we now have the admirable example of the NYC citizen’s group Right of Way creation of the NYC Vision Zero Clock.

A reader of Care for Crash Victims wrote in with a suggestion that:

“The previous mayor of NYC, Mike Bloomberg, started Mayors Against Illegal Guns. Why don't you suggest to Mayor de Blasio that he start Mayors Against Motor Vehicle Deaths. If you could help him recruit mayors of large and small cities, this could become a powerful coalition/network and have a big impact. It would bypass the inertia of NHTSA which should be leading the effort but is not. This could be a very effective movement.”

This also makes sense in view of the new DOT Secretary of Transportation being a former Mayor of Charlotte, NC whose citizens suffer a crash fatality, on average, every week. During the years 2009 – 2013, when Mr. Foxx was Mayor, about 200 people died of their crash injuries in Charlotte, NC. So it is reasonable to hope Mr. Foxx will be willing to support a citizen goal for zero crash deaths in cities by 2024. That would amount to about a 10% reduction each year.

Citizens’ Race To Stop Crash Deaths in a Decade

We citizens can and must do more than hope. Citizens can:

- Adopt Goal of Vision Zero Crash Deaths in all U.S. cities by 2024.
- Create Vision Zero Clocks for all U.S. cities to encourage and measure progress.
- Motivate political involvement to achieve Vision Zero Crash Deaths by 2024. For tools linking Congressional Districts with Crash Deaths Data See <http://www.careforcrashvictims.com/CrashDeathMappingTools.php>

The Challenge: Citizens’ race to stop crash deaths in a decade. In 1970, students at MIT in Boston challenged students from Cal Tech in Pasadena to a Clean Air Car Race. They invited students from all universities to join over the summer to build a car that could meet emission standards proposed by Nixon for 1980 and by Sen. Muskie for 1975. The students demonstrated it could be done that very summer of 1970.

Imagine if citizens today called for a Citizens’ race to stop crash deaths in a decade.

- Imagine a challenge from citizens to Mayors de Blasio, LA Mayor Eric Garcetti, and former Mayor Anthony Foxx to create such a race to stop crash deaths.
- Imagine the competition of the two cities NY and LA with the highest annual number of crash fatalities to achieve Vision Zero crash fatalities first.
- Imagine the LA Times challenging the NY Times on coverage of this race.
- Imagine citizens demanding that Mayors challenge the students in their Universities to get involved to discover and help apply safety countermeasures.

- Imagine giving students a worthy and important goal. Unleash the energy and talents of students in Schools of Law, Medicine, Engineering, Public Health and Safety, Journalism, and Public Administration and Management – each year over the next decade – until we achieve Vision Zero Crash Deaths in our cities.
- Challenge students to research crashes, injuries, treatments, and outcomes and offer solutions.

We have recently passed the 50th Anniversary of President Kennedy’s speech in which he said: *“I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth.”*

“I believe we possess all the resources and talents necessary. But the facts of the matter are that we have never made the national decisions or marshaled the national resources required for such leadership. We have never specified long-range goals on an urgent time schedule, or managed our resources and our time so as to insure their fulfillment...”

Applying that “can do” spirit today, we can abolish preventable crash deaths and serious injuries in a decade. We, the people, need such leadership to build safer vehicles, safer roads, and a more effective emergency medical care infrastructure capable of returning motorists home alive.

Citizens can do this! Yes we can!

Table 124
Persons Killed, Population, and Fatality Rates by City

City	State	Fatalities			Population	Total Fatality Rate per 100,000 Population
		Total Killed	Pedestrians Killed			
			Number	Percent of Total Killed		
New York	NY	271	138	50.9	8,244,910	3.29
Los Angeles	CA	209	88	42.1	3,819,702	5.47
Chicago	IL	119	36	30.3	2,707,120	4.40
Houston	TX	196	49	25.0	2,145,146	9.14
Philadelphia	PA	87	30	34.5	1,536,471	5.66
Phoenix	AZ	124	34	27.4	1,469,471	8.44
San Antonio	TX	121	32	26.4	1,359,758	8.90
San Diego	CA	65	21	32.3	1,326,179	4.90
Dallas	TX	107	26	24.3	1,223,229	8.75
San Jose	CA	36	18	50.0	967,487	3.72
Jacksonville	FL	81	17	21.0	827,908	9.78
Indianapolis	IN	84	22	26.2	827,609	10.15
Austin	TX	54	22	40.7	820,611	6.58
San Francisco	CA	30	16	53.3	812,826	3.69
Columbus	OH	57	17	29.8	797,434	7.15
Fort Worth	TX	65	16	24.6	758,738	8.57
Charlotte	NC	59	22	37.3	751,087	7.86
Detroit	MI	78	25	32.1	706,585	11.04
El Paso	TX	71	15	21.1	665,568	10.67
Memphis	TN	74	17	23.0	652,050	11.35
Boston	MA	13	2	15.4	625,087	2.08
Seattle	WA	20	2	10.0	620,778	3.22
Denver	CO	33	11	33.3	619,968	5.32
Baltimore	MD	25	9	36.0	619,493	4.04
Washington	DC	27	8	29.6	617,996	4.37
Nashville-Davidson	TN	66	11	16.7	609,644	10.83
Louisville-Jefferson Co.	KY	59	17	28.8	602,011	9.80
Milwaukee	WI	37	13	35.1	597,867	6.19
Portland	OR	34	8	23.5	593,820	5.73
Oklahoma City	OK	72	6	8.3	591,967	12.16
Las Vegas	NV	24	8	33.3	589,317	4.07
Albuquerque	NM	43	10	23.3	552,804	7.78
Tucson	AZ	63	21	33.3	525,796	11.98
Fresno	CA	34	14	41.2	501,362	6.78
Sacramento	CA	40	15	37.5	472,178	8.47
Long Beach	CA	27	4	14.8	465,576	5.80
Kansas City	MO	66	17	25.8	463,202	14.25
Mesa	AZ	40	5	12.5	446,518	8.96
Virginia Beach	VA	24	3	12.5	442,707	5.42
Atlanta	GA	39	11	28.2	432,427	9.02

Source: Population—Bureau of the Census.