

Turning Tragedy Into Advocacy

Coming Together On A Mission
To Make Our Roads Safer

3/20/2021

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Why do we need a National Traffic Safety Ombudsman?

Despite the fact that some have acknowledged the problem as a public health crisis, we have yet to acknowledge it as a united nation. It has not been declared a national issue. And the citizens of our country have not been mobilized to become a part of the solution.

Furthermore, when federal traffic safety regulations are being considered, saved lives are too often weighed and found wanting in comparison to societal economic costs. A prime example is override rulemaking, in which questionable cost/benefit analysis conclusions have hindered the advancement of proven safety measures (some of which the industry has since found ways to offer at no additional cost).

A Traffic Safety Ombudsman remedies this by establishing an independent advocate who will serve as a vigilant voice for vulnerable victims of vehicle violence and who will mobilize safety professionals, citizens, and crash survivors, in tactical traffic safety projects with nationwide impact.

There are, in fact, numerous organizations established for the purpose of protecting citizens on the roads of our country, including NHTSA ;FMCSA; Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety; Center for Auto Safety; Truck Safety Coalition; Vision Zero Network ; MADD.

Do we really need another?

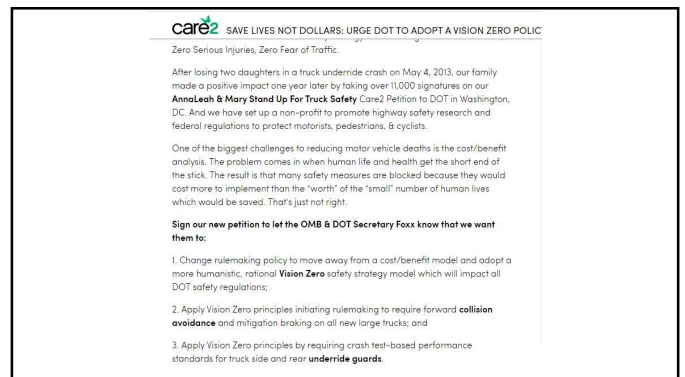
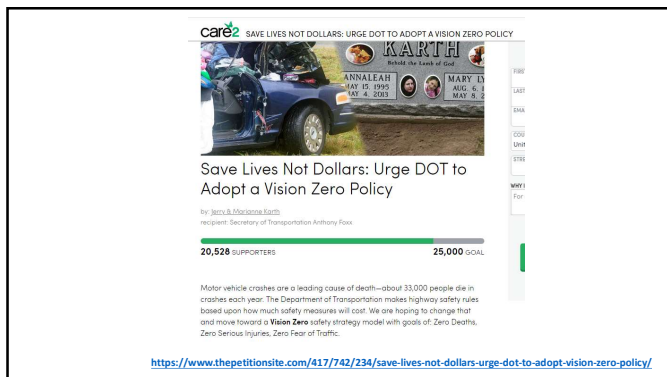
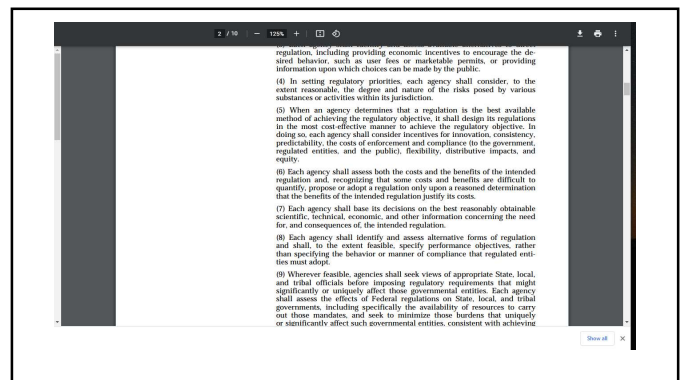
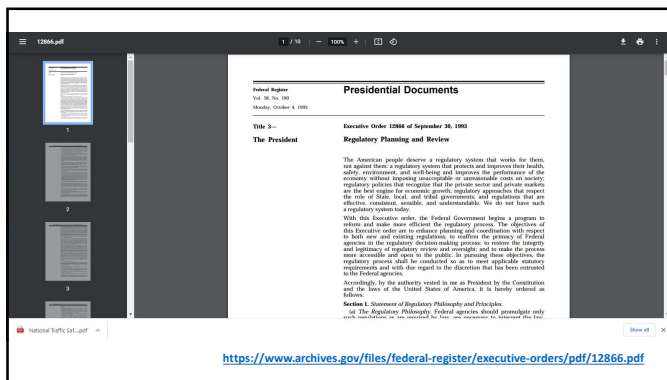
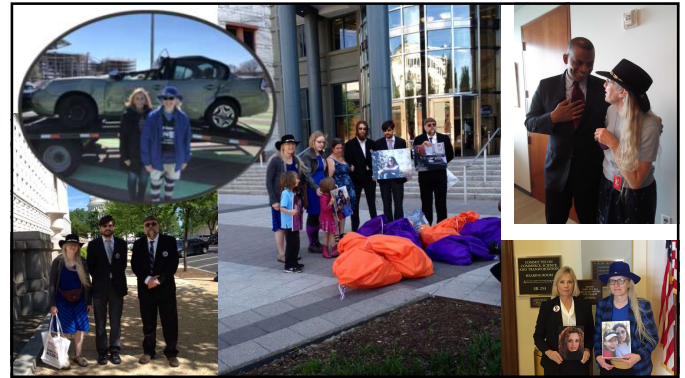
There are also numerous issue-related groups which focus on a particular crash cause or traffic safety goal, including Families for Safe Streets , Traffic Safety Coalition, many Vision Zero groups across the country, and countless other concerned groups – not to mention government-based transportation-related organizations. Fortunately, the Road to Zero Coalition recently took on the goal of uniting these groups. Nonetheless, the country's strategy suffers from fragmentation.

Have any of these groups, individually or together, taken on the role of being a voice for the victims – and the victims only? Have they taken a comprehensive look at the causes and solutions for traffic tragedies—not simply as a transportation issue but a public health problem? Have they harnessed the energy of survivors of every kind of traffic safety issue and multiplied their efforts and resources by nationwide networking? Have they brought together the various stakeholders, including ordinary citizens, to talk around the table? Have they made sure that rulemaking is focused on safety above all else and that safety is made a national as well as a community priority? Have they brought about a truly safe road system in our country?

Who is actually acting as a traffic safety ombudsman, an advocate for traffic safety as a cohesive whole? Who has been able to persuade our country's leadership that traffic safety should be addressed as a national priority? And who has been given the role to follow-through and ensure that we will stay on course with that mission?

[ALMFTS Traffic Safety Project Plan](#)
[2017 RTZC Proposal](#)





Last night, Pres. Obama referred in the past tense to crash fatalities as a public health problem.

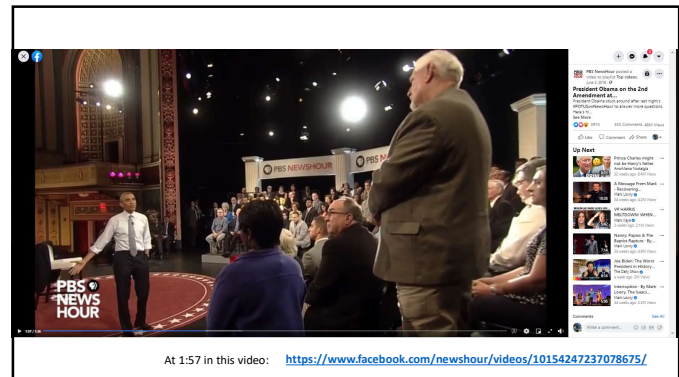
© June 3, 2016 • Safety Advocacy, Truck Safety • auto safety, crash fatalities, President Obama, public health problem, traffic safety, Vision Zero • Marianne

Apparently, President Obama is okay with the current state of traffic fatalities. Anyway it sounds as if he thinks that we have already done all we can to reduce crash deaths.

At least that is what it sounds like to me from last night's PBS News Hour video of President Obama speaking at a Town Hall (June 2, 2016):

"We used to have really bad auto fatality rates. The auto fatality rate has actually dropped precipitously, drastically since I was a kid. Why is that? We decided we had seat belt laws. We decided to have manufacturers put air bags in place. We decided to crack down on drunk driving and texting. We decided to redesign roads so that they were less likely to have a car bank.

"We studied what is causing these fatalities using science and data and evidence. And then we slowly treated it like the public health problem it was. And it got reduced."



At 1:57 in this video: <https://www.facebook.com/newsHour/videos/10154247237078675/>

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Have we solved the traffic violence problem?

- If not, are we satisfied with how things are progressing?
- What other alternatives might there be for bringing about change?
- Nationwide network of community traffic safety advocacy groups.

Dwight Eisenhower: Inspirational Crusader for Traffic Safety: Would that he could speak to us today.

© January 28, 2017 • Safety Advocacy • Dwight Eisenhower, nationwide network of traffic safety community action groups, Vision Zero • Annaleah

I was suitably impressed as I sat on my laptop train en route to Washington, D.C., last week and read the words which President Dwight Eisenhower wrote and spoke about traffic safety:

President Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Federal Road in Highway Safety Chapter 2: A Crusade for Safety

(Know that he was responsible for our improved interstate system, but I did not know that he was such a genuinely enthusiastic crusader for traffic safety; there are a few examples among many.)

Although President Eisenhower would not become fully engaged in a highway initiative until the General Plan speech in 1956, he acted on highway safety in July 1953 when he went to the Cabinet Room of the White House with 28 business leaders. He told the leaders that his goal was to save 17,000 lives and \$2.25 billion a year by reducing accidents. According to an account in *Transport Topics* for August 5, 2002:

President Eisenhower told the group ... he is tired of having three or four times as many people killed a year on the highways as were killed in Korea. He said the history of efforts to save lives on the highway showed that when something is done on a coordinated basis the accident toll drops sharply.

<https://annaleahmary.com/2017/01/dwight-eisenhower-inspirational-crusader-for-traffic-safety-would-that-he-could-speak-to-us-today/>

"I was struck by a statistic that seemed to me shocking. In the last 50 years, the automobile has killed more people in the United States than we have had fatalities in all our wars: on all the battlefields of all the wars of the United States since its founding 177 years ago

He acknowledged that this was a problem that "by its nature has no easy solution." He did not intend to get into the technicalities of this "many-sided" problem. However, he felt that the key was public opinion. "In a democracy, public opinion is everything." He explained:

If there were community groups established that could command the respect and the support of every single citizen of that city or that community, so that the traffic policeman, so that everyone else that has a responsibility in this regard, will know that public opinion is behind him. Because I have now arrived at the only point that I think it worthwhile to try to express to you, because in all the technicalities of this thing you know much more than I do.

If, he said, "we can mobilize a sufficient public opinion, this problem, like all of those to which free men fall heir can be solved."

Hmmm. . . sounds sort of like a **National Vision Zero Goal** and a **Nationwide Network of Community Traffic Safety Action Groups**. . .

What would be different about the National Traffic Safety Ombudsman?

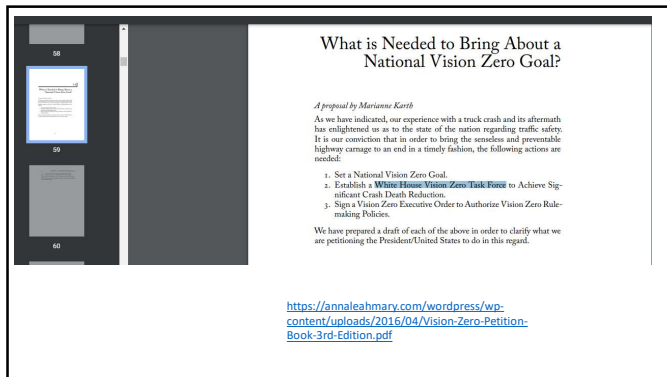
Pros & cons of this strategy:

- "It's a better use of our time to sway the people that already have power than to create some position that will take years to create and then there is no guarantee who will be hired for that job." *(Could we require that it be a victim family member?)*

What do we want the role of National Traffic Safety Ombudsman to look like?

Where should the NTSO be located/housed?

- Office of the Secretary?
- Outside of DOT?
- White House Vision Zero Task Force
- How do we preserve the independence of this role?



Our families cannot continue to sustain this unacceptably high number of losses and injuries. Therefore, I am directing the Office of the Vice President to lead an inter-agency effort to address traffic safety issues, including coordinating Federal enforcement efforts by executive departments and agencies (agencies) and helping institutions meet their obligations under Federal law. To these ends, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of the White House Task Force to Protect Road Users From Traffic Crashes..

There is established a White House Task Force to Protect Road Users From Traffic Crashes. The Task Force shall be chaired by the National Traffic Safety Ombudsman.

INSERT: The Task Force shall be chaired by the **National Traffic Safety Ombudsman**.

The Chair will also establish an Ad-Hoc Committee to advise this Task Force, and appoint to the Committee at least 12 individuals with expertise in areas related to traffic safety, including—but not limited to—driver training, truck driver training, driver fatigue, traffic safety engineering, state and local traffic law enforcement, crash reconstruction, the automotive industry, the trucking industry, injury prevention, truck drivers, and safety advocacy. At least one member will be someone who has been directly affected by a traffic fatality.

Insert: At least **four** members will be. . .

The Task Force shall work with agencies to develop a coordinated Federal response to traffic safety issues. The functions of the Task Force are advisory only and shall include making recommendations to meet the following objectives:

Presidential Memorandum for a White House Vision Zero Task Force

JFK: The Passing of the Torch: Spontaneous combustion ignited by a petition signed by UM students

©October 24, 2015 #annaleahmary #JFK #Traffic Safety #highway safety #JFK #passing of the torch #Peace Corps #justice #advocacy #crash victims #Vision Zero #Traffic Safety

This morning, I was reminded of my early beginnings as an advocate for nursing home patients. My first job out of college was as the Chapter Director of a local advocate organization for nursing home patients. The position was as a VISTA Volunteer—a statewide version of the Peace Corps.

I have thought many times how that role prepared me to speak up on behalf of the de-voiceless victims who could not speak for themselves. It taught me to be tough and all-gent and thorough. It paved the way for me to be an advocate for crash victims.

Then, I read my email and found the latest edition of the University of Michigan digital newsletter, Michigan Safety, which reported an event. One particular article caught my attention: the early beginnings of the Peace Corps which took place in October 1960 at the University of Michigan. I read it with great interest.

<http://www.michigan.edu/2015/10/24-the-peace-corps/>



<https://annaleahmary.com/2015/10/jfk-the-passing-of-the-torch-spontaneous-combustion-ignited-by-a-petition-signed-by-um-students-2/>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ncja6xsc4pE>

Ideas for Survivor Advocate Networking

Problem Solution:

1. Nationwide Network of Road to Zero/Vision Zero/Traffic Safety Community Action Groups

A. Description: In order to go beyond the current solutions, the Traffic Safety Ombudsman (TSO) will catalyze the active participation of victim family members and crash survivors—who are often possessed with a tenacity and energy borne from grief and frustration—in meaningful and impactful ways. The TSO will also seek to unify efforts nationwide to be more effective.

To this end, the TSO will organize and facilitate a nationwide network of RTZ/Traffic Safety/Vision Zero community action/advocacy groups through the development of a pilot project for a state-based Road to Zero Coalition which would reproduce its efforts through and support the development of RTZ groups in local communities throughout the state.

The TSO will make important connections with existing traffic safety advocacy groups and harness that energy and knowledge into a more effective, united effort.

Former U.S. President John F. Kennedy launched the [Peace Corps](#) as a result of the seed of an idea suggested to University of Michigan students during a campaign stop. Let's follow that example and harness the energy of today's college graduates to [mobilize the citizens](#) of this country to be personally involved in this battle against the [Goliath](#) who is [shorter our loved ones through Death by Motor Vehicle](#).

<https://annaleahmary.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Ideas-for-Survivor-Advocate-Networking.pdf>

We've waited
52 years.

"It is anticipated that the proposed Standard will be amended, after technical studies have been completed, to extend the requirement for underride protection to the sides of large vehicles."

Federal Register, Vol. 34, No. 53 —
Wednesday, March 19, 1969

Fix the underride problem
NOW.

I've been married **16,071** days.

It's been **18,993** days since DOT said
that they were going to add side
guards to large vehicles. And they
still have not done so!

Haddon called it a "tragic puzzle" that "both the problem of needless passenger compartment penetration in auto-truck rear underride crashes, and the availability of solutions to it, have been known for years both to industry and government – yet, neither has acted to apply the solutions."

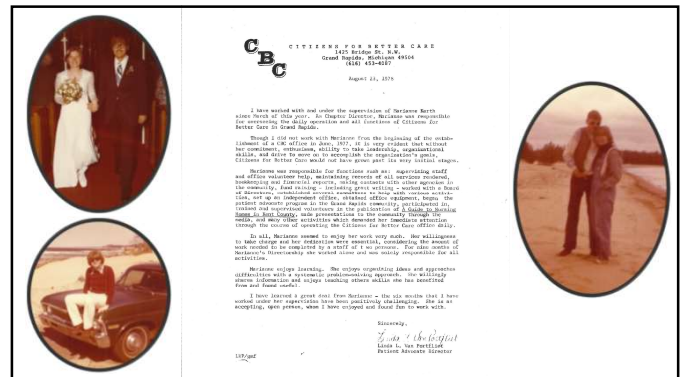


"Blood has been shed, heads *literally* have rolled and countless thousands of Americans been injured because those agencies did not act. Further inaction would be inexcusable," Haddon warned.

Testimony by Dr. William Haddon, M.D., President of the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, to the Senate Consumer Subcommittee Investigative Hearing on TRUCK UNDERRIDE CRASHES, held on March 16, 1977, from [IIHS Status Report](#).

3/9/2021

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Nursing Homes: Getting Good Care There

- [Long Term Care Ombudsman](#)
- written to empower consumers to advocate for good care for their loved ones living in a nursing home
- Long-Term Care Ombudsmen and other advocates are using the book to teach groups of family members of nursing home residents: what to expect, what questions to ask, how to approach staff, and how to be a good advocate for their loved one. The book is also being used in training sessions with guardians of residents, long-term care ombudsmen (LTCO), nursing home staff, board and care home staff, and church groups interested in aging and caregiving.
- Think of this book as a tool for advocacy as well as for education. Let this teaching guide be a springboard for taking the book's message to different audiences.

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Let's follow that example and harness the energy of today's college graduates to mobilize the citizens of this country to be personally involved in this battle against the Goliath who is slaying our loved ones through Death by Motor Vehicle.

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
@SecretaryPete

It's rarely mattered more to be willing to bring your talent to public service. I want to see the kinds of people who went to NASA in the 60s and Silicon Valley in the 90s coming into public service now. #SXSW
3:48 PM · Mar 18, 2021 · Twitter Web App

HOW? [Through the AmeriCorps VISTA Volunteer Program](#)

- 441 Congressional District TSO Coordinators @ \$15,000/yr. = \$6,615,000
- 51 State TSO Coordinators @ \$30,000/yr. = \$1,530,000
- 1 National Traffic Safety Coordinator @ \$150,000/yr.
- Subtotal \$8,295,000
- Toss in \$1,705,000 for laptops & costs for annual TSO conference, plus White House Vision Zero Task Force expenses
- TOTAL = \$10,000,000/yr.
- DOT Value of a Statistical Life (2016) = \$9.6 million

How should we petition for it?

- Letter of request to President Biden for a memorandum?
- Letter to Secretary Buttigieg
- Letter to Congressional leadership (for inclusion in Infrastructure Bill)

What should be included in the petition & should we tie it to a National Traffic Safety Act?

We Have Never Before Had a National Traffic Safety Ombudsman

October 20, 2019 • Safety advocacy • National Traffic Safety Inc. National Traffic Safety Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. #NationalTrafficSafety

On September 3, 1969, according to the Congressional Record from that day, Congress discussed plans to fund and expand the National Traffic & Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966. Although we have made progress since that time, still today there are way too many people dying on our roads. We have not made it a national priority to address these deaths and serious injuries.

A National Traffic Safety Act of 2021 would provide a framework for a National Traffic Safety Ombudsman to oversee a Towards Zero Traffic Safety Task Force of diverse stakeholders to collaborate for **Safer Vehicles, Safer Trucks, Safer Streets, and Safer Drivers** to address the national public health and traffic safety crisis in order to make a significant reduction of the 36,560 annual traffic-related deaths in the United States (2018).

Russell Wahlberg, Corporate Crime Reporter, published an interview on this proposed draft on October 20: Monroe Keith Calls for Creation of National Traffic Safety Ombudsman.

Congress, the ball is in your court! Will you act now to end these deaths?



<https://annaleahmary.com/2019/10/we-have-never-before-had-a-national-traffic-safety-ombudsman/>

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Why a **National Traffic Safety Act**? How would this relate to the Infrastructure Bill and the Surface Reauthorization legislation?

<https://annaleahmary.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/National-Traffic-Safety-Act-of-2019-Brochure-inc.-LINKS.pdf>

Initial Reactions To This Idea

Where do we go from here?