

## **Vision Zero Presidential Memorandum**

### **FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

**SUBJECT:** Establishing a ***White House Task Force to Achieve the Vision Zero Goal of Crash Death Reduction***

On average, 40,000 people die each year in crashes on our roads. According to *Advocates for Highway & Auto Safety*, 362,532 Americans have lost their lives due to vehicle violence over the last 10 years. Using NHTSA figures of estimated injuries, nearly 1.5 million additional people suffered serious injuries during that time. Using DOT values of \$9 million in comprehensive costs per fatality, these losses would be valued by DOT to be about \$3 trillion.

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.

(a) Membership of the Task Force. In addition to the Chair, the Task Force shall consist of the following members:

- (i) the Attorney General;
- (ii) the Secretary of Transportation;
- (iii) the Secretary of Health and Human Services;
- (iv) the Secretary of Education;
- (v) the Secretary of Labor;
- (vi) the Secretary of Commerce;
- (vii) the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy;
- (viii) the Director of the Domestic Policy Council;
- (ix) the Cabinet Secretary; and
- (x) the heads of agencies or offices as the Chair may designate.

(b) A member of the Task Force may designate, to perform the Task Force functions of the member, senior officials who are part of the member's agency or office, and who are full-time officers or employees of the Federal Government.

(c) 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—state-of-the-art vehicle technology to prevent crashes (such as detecting distracted, drowsy, drug-impaired, and alcohol-impaired driving), 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 four members will be persons who have been directly affected by a traffic fatality.

## **Section 2. Mission and Function of the Task Force.**

(a) 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:

- (i) providing all stakeholders with evidence-based best and promising practices for preventing and responding to traffic crashes;
- (ii) building on the Federal Government's existing regulations and enforcement efforts to ensure that institutions comply fully with their legal and ethical obligations to prevent and respond to traffic crashes;
- (iii) increasing the transparency of the Federal Government's enforcement activities concerning traffic safety issues;
- (iv) broadening the public's awareness of traffic safety issues and, in particular, distraction and driver fatigue as it affects all drivers; and
- (v) facilitating coordination among agencies engaged in addressing traffic safety issues and those charged with helping bring institutions into compliance with the law.

(b) In accordance with applicable law and in addition to regular meetings, the Task Force shall consult with external stakeholders, including the Governors Highway Safety Association, MADD, other safety groups, ATA, TTMA, paramedics, coroners, ER professionals, law enforcement agencies, DMVs, DAs, American Association for Justice, research and crash test organizations, educational organizations, truck drivers, and others as deemed wise and appropriate – especially families and friends of victims of vehicle violence.

(c) Because traffic crashes affect all ages, the Task Force shall evaluate how its educational proposals and recommendations may apply to, and may be implemented by, schools, school districts, and other elementary and secondary educational entities receiving Federal financial assistance.

## **Section 3. Action Plan.**

(a) Within 90 days of the date of this memorandum, the Task Force shall develop and submit proposals and recommendations to the President for a National Vision Zero Goal. This will include specific strategies for moving toward the reduction of crash deaths and serious injuries. It will also outline specific strategies for establishing national traffic safety standards which are proven to reduce crash deaths and which could then be adopted, as is, by every state. These strategies will ensure that the following will occur:

- (i) address the problem of traffic safety in a coordinated manner, including the following concerns: state-of-the-art vehicle technology to prevent crashes (such as detecting distracted, drowsy, drug-impaired, and alcohol-impaired driving); development of safety regulations for autonomous vehicles and crash avoidance technologies and training in their usage; road design and conditions especially as it impacts safe streets in all communities; all kinds of enforcement issues to be pro-active in preventing crashes; handling of traffic safety when crashes occur; speeding; driver fatigue—acknowledging the scope, extent, and gravity of Driving While Fatigued (DWF) as a reckless behavior both for truck drivers and drivers of light vehicles, and adjusting the legal system to reflect this reality; all kinds of distracted and impaired driving;

automotive safety defect issues and their resolution as a high priority issue in a timely manner; and other problems as deemed appropriate, including the need for manufacturers to be held liable for deaths due to their criminal negligence and for DOT to act with the necessary authority to issue and enforce Vision Zero safety regulations which impact not only vehicle occupants but also Vulnerable Road Users.

(ii) address truck safety as a high priority due to the multitude of issues which need addressing, including: truck driver scheduling policies; truck driver compensation policies; safety technology; override guards; truck driver training; CDL granting policies and procedures; hours of service monitoring; and truck maintenance.

(iii) maximizing the Federal Government's effectiveness in addressing traffic safety issues by, among other measures, enhancing communication among vital stakeholders—fostering an attitude of cooperation and shared goals rather than opposition and competition—as well as making its enforcement activities transparent and accessible; and

(iv) promoting greater coordination, communication, and consistency among the agencies and offices that enforce the Federal laws addressing traffic safety issues and support improved system-wide responses to traffic crashes and newly-identified factors, research information, and recommended solutions; and measuring the success of prevention and response efforts and providing the public with this information;

(b) Within 1 year of the date of this memorandum, and then on an annual basis, the Task Force shall provide a report to the President on implementation efforts with respect to this memorandum.

#### **Section 4. General Provisions.**

(a) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

(b) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an agency or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(c) The heads of agencies and offices shall assist and provide information to the Task Force, consistent with applicable law, as may be necessary to carry out the functions of the Task Force. Each agency and office shall bear its own expenses of participating in the Task Force.

(d) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations, which will be specifically sought after to support the effective and timely implementation of the goals of this Task Force.

(e) The Secretary of Transportation is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the Federal Register.

Respectfully submitted,

Marianne Karth, March 17, 2021