



**Statement of Barbara Harsha, Executive Director
Governors Highway Safety Association
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and Revenue Study Commission
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I. Introduction

Good morning. The Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) is a nonprofit organization that represents state highway safety offices (SHSO). These offices are required as a condition of the Section 402 State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program (23 U.S.C. 402) under the Highway Safety Act of 1966, as amended. GHSA members are appointed by their governors to administer federal the Section 402 and other behavioral highway safety grant programs and to develop and implement statewide highway safety plans. The Association focuses on issues relating to the behavior of drivers and other road users. As such, GHSA is concerned about impaired driving, inadequate occupant protection, speeding, motorcycle safety, and bicycle and pedestrian safety, younger drivers, older drivers and other behavioral issues.

Nearly half the SHSO's are located in state departments of transportation. Twenty-three are part of the state's department of public safety and the others are in other types of state agencies. Most SHSO's are quite small, ranging from two to 35 staff persons.

GHSA members are responsible for administering eight federal behavioral grant programs (the Section 402 program and seven incentive grants) and two penalty transfer programs. In addition, SHSO's are actively involved in developing and implementing their states' Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) required under the Section 148 program (23 U.S.C. 148) that was authorized by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). They are also very involved in managing their states' efforts to automate, link and otherwise improve their states' crash and other related data systems. A handful of SHSO's are also responsible for administering their states' Safe Routes to School programs. Seventeen SHSO's are responsible for administering the Fatal Analysis Reporting System (FARS) for their states, about a dozen also administer motorcycle training and education programs, a few also administer the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) and two have direct responsibility for driver education for their states.

II. Background

Considerable progress has been made in highway safety over the last forty years. The current highway fatality rate has gone from 5.5 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles of travel (VMT) in 1966 to 1.45 fatalities per 100 million miles of VMT in 2005 (the latest year for which statistics are currently available). Safety belt usage rates have increased from 11percent in the early 1970's to 81.5percent in 2006. Impaired driving fatalities have declined 30percent in the last twenty-five years. The proportion of drivers in fatal crashes who had been drinking dropped from 41percent in 1982 to 24percent in 2005.

In the last decade, however, progress has slowed considerably:

- While the motor vehicle fatality rate has declined and total motor vehicle-related injuries have declined substantially, total fatalities have stayed nearly constant for the last ten years and, in fact, rose very slightly in 2005
- Although safety belt use has risen incrementally each year, it actually declined in 2005, albeit by a very small amount
- Alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities have declined only 5percent over the last decade, including a marginal .02percent decline in 2005
- Speeding constituted about 30percent of all fatal crashes in 2005 – a number that has been unchanged for the last decade
- Motorcycle fatalities increased in 2005 and have increased by 115percent over the last eight years
- Large truck fatalities remained relatively constant since 1996 except for a two-year period when they dipped slightly. They increased over the last two years, and one out of eight fatalities in 2005 involved a collision with large trucks.

This slowdown is attributable to several factors. Current highway safety programs have affected the behavior of those who most easily influenced and who are basically good drivers. The remaining population is high risk drivers who exhibit a range of risky behaviors such as driving impaired, speeding, and failing to wear safety belts – typically the behavior of young male drivers. This population is much more difficult to reach through traditional education and enforcement programs. Changes in state policy (such as state repeal of motorcycle helmet legislation) and inaction on key legislation (such as enactment of primary safety belt laws) have contributed to the stagnation in the number of motor vehicle-related fatalities. Failure to adequately address the issue of speeding has contributed to the problem as well.

Inadequate resources have also been a factor in the slowdown of progress. Although approximately 80-85percent of motor vehicle crashes are due to driver and road user behavior, less than 2percent of federal-aid highway funding is dedicated to programs aimed at improving the behavior of drivers and road users.

In effect, current federal highway safety programs have ensured the maintenance of gains in highway safety but have not allowed states and communities to make “the great leap forward.” Correspondingly and very importantly, without federal highway safety grant programs, current motor vehicle-related fatalities, injuries and rates would be far worse.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has projected that, if VMT continues to increase at an average rate of 2percent per year and if the current motor vehicle fatality rate remains the same as it currently is, then fatalities would increase by 60 percent to 70,000 per year by 2025. Clearly, this is unacceptable. Federal and state policy must be adopted to prevent this tragedy from occurring.

III. Recommendations

A. Make Improvements to Impaired Driving and Occupant Protection Programs

Using a vehicle’s safety belts is one of the best protections an occupant can have in the event of a crash, including a drunk driving crash. The best way to encourage the use of safety belts is to aggressively enforce a state’s safety belt law. Undertaking high visibility enforcement efforts is a proven, effective countermeasure.¹ However, such enforcement has been limited to a two-week period every year. More resources for high visibility enforcement would mean more frequent enforcement waves and more paid media to publicize the enforcement. Additionally, well researched model occupant protection programs would help states work with young males, minorities and other high risk populations. Research -based educational messages that could be used between enforcement mobilizations would also boost safety belt usage.

Progress has been made in impaired driving through the enactment of tough laws, enforcement of those laws and, to a much lesser extent, through the appropriate adjudication of those laws. However, the “system” for handling impaired driving is broken in most states. The enforcement community is overburdened and under-funded. Often the youngest and most inexperienced prosecutors are assigned to drunk driving cases. Judges don’t always understand the complexities of a state’s impaired driving laws, as evidenced by the small number of states whose judges actively use their states’ ignition interlock laws. Communication between the different parts of the impaired driving system is haphazard, and electronic records that can trace an offender from point of arrest to disposition are mostly non-existent.

¹ Solomon, M.G. and Chaffe, R.H.B *May 2004 “Click It or Ticket” Safety Belt Mobilization Evaluation*. Final report, contract DTNH22-99-D-25099. Washington, DC, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2006)

Much more emphasis should be placed on a systems approach to drunk driving.² Model prevention programs should be developed and evaluated to ensure that drunk driving is prevented in the first place. More resources should be devoted to impaired driving enforcement, along with up-to-date training and equipment for enforcement personnel. States should be given more resources for state Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutors and Judicial Fellows who will provide training and support for their peers who adjudicate drunk driving cases. The probation and treatment communities must be brought together with enforcement and adjudication personnel so that offenders are given appropriate sentences and there is long-term supervision so to prevent the offenders from re-offending.

DUI courts have proven to be a successful strategy that approaches the DUI offender in a more holistic manner. The intent of DUI courts is to treat the underlying alcohol abuse problem and prevent the offender from re-offending and recycling through the judicial system. More resources need to be devoted to state implementation of such courts.

Resources must also be devoted to creating electronic data systems that can trace an offender along every point in the identification, punishment and treatment process. This will prevent offenders from slipping through the cracks, as they can do in many states.

B. Focus on Speeding

The nation has completely failed on the public policy issue of speeding. Drivers commonly treat speed limits as guidance and believe that there is a 10 mph cushion over which they can drive without consequences. Movies and television glamorize speeding and have contributed to the culture of speed in the country. Speeds have been going up, and studies by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS)³ have shown that injuries and fatalities have increased as a result. Last year, Texas raised its speed limit on a stretch of rural interstate to 80 mph, Kentucky just did so and other states are certain to follow. The impact is that gains made in impaired driving and occupant protection has been offset, to some extent, by speed-related losses.

The relationship between speeding and injuries and fatalities is well known. According to a 2006 study by Elvik and van Schagen,⁴ when travel speed increases by 1 percent, the injury crash rate increases by about 2 percent, the serious injury crash rate increases by about 3 percent, and the fatal crash rate increases by about 4 percent. Conversely, a 1 percent decrease in travel speed reduces injury crashes by about 2 percent, serious injury crashes by about 3 percent, and fatal crashes by about 4 percent. The payoff is substantial, therefore, if speeding can be reduced.

Although the federal government is involved in a number of activities to address speeding, the issue is not a priority for the three federal agencies that have jurisdiction over speeding: the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). There have been no major FHWA or NHTSA initiatives to control speeding, and little action has been taken to implement the recommendations of the 2005 National Forum on Excessive Speeding.

In order to impact speeding, all three levels of government must take action. Localities should address speed in areas where there is already public support for doing so: school zones and neighborhoods. States should improve the way they set speeds (not just based on the 85th percentile), increase sanctions for speeding, enhance enforcement of speed limits and

² Hedlund J. and McCartt A., Drunk Driving: Seeking Additional Solutions, Prepared for the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, (May 2002)

³ Status Report, [Vol. 34, No. 1, January 16, 1999](#): Higher speed limits on interstate highways in 24 states result in 15 percent more motor vehicle deaths

⁴ Aarts, L. and van Schagen I. Driving speed and the risk of road crashes: A review. *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 38, pp. 215-224.(2006)

aggressively address speeding in work zones. The federal government should make speeding a national priority and all three administrators should use their bully pulpit to address the issue. In addition, NHTSA should launch a nationwide media campaign that begins to change public attitudes about speeding and should work closely with car companies and the entertainment industry to alter the value and perception of speeding. FHWA should collect better data about travel speeds to develop a clearer picture of actual speeding behavior. All three federal agencies should research and evaluate speed-related countermeasures to determine what is effective and what is not.

C. Encourage Policy Changes

One of the key elements in any successful state highway safety program is strong laws. All states have .08 BAC level laws, zero tolerance laws for drivers under age 21, minimum drinking age laws, safety belt laws and child restraint laws. Most states have administrative license revocation laws, laws allowing sobriety checkpoints, laws prohibiting open containers, and laws enhancing penalties for repeat offenders. In other areas (such as graduated licensing laws, booster seat laws and enhanced penalties for high BAC offenders), states are voluntarily and actively moving to enact new laws or strengthen existing ones.

However, only half the states plus the District of Columbia have primary safety belt laws in which it is an offense (in and of itself) to drive without a safety belt. Only twenty states plus D.C. have all-rider mandatory motorcycle helmet laws. Both of these laws have been extensively researched and found to be to be very effective.⁵ Thousands of lives could be saved if every state enacted both laws.

One approach is to authorize federal sanctions for states that fail to enact one or both laws. Sanctions for failure to enact certain impaired driving laws and laws affecting young drivers have been effective. However, in those cases, there was also widespread public support for both the laws and the sanctions. It is less clear that primary belt and motorcycle helmet law sanctions enjoy the kind of public support that the other types of sanctions do. Further, states currently face seven federal sanctions for a variety of safety-related purposes, and state legislatures are already very resentful of federal mandates such as these.

An alternate approach would be to enact sizeable federal incentives for the passage of both laws. The current Section 406 (23 U.S.C. 406) safety belt performance incentive program was moderately successful in its first year. Four states (AK, KY, MS, SC) enacted primary belt laws as a result of the incentives. However, for large states the potential incentive was very small compared to the level of highway construction dollars the state received. If incentives are to be effective, they must be sizeable enough to attract the attention of the elected and appointed leaders of the state.

In addition, changes must be made to SAFETEA-LU that would allow state officials to lobby on behalf of safety legislation. Currently, the surface transportation law prohibits the use of federal funds for any activity designed to urge a state or local legislator to favor or oppose the adoption of a specific pending legislative proposal. Federal incentive grant programs encourage states to enact specific highway safety laws and federal sanctions penalize states for failing to do so. Yet federal lobbying restrictions prohibit state grantees from using their federal funding to lobby on behalf of those same state laws. It makes no sense and has hampered state efforts to enact important state highway safety legislation.

⁵ Oulette, J. and Kasantikul, V, *Motorcycle Helmet Effect on a Per-Crash Basis in the Thailand and Hurt Studies* (2006)

Liu, C. Lindsey T., Chou-Lin C. and Utter D., *States With Primary Enforcement Laws Have Lower Fatality Rates*, NHTSA Traffic Safety Facts Research Notes, DOT HS 810 557 (Feb. 2006)

D. Utilize Technology

Aggressive use of technology holds much promise for highway safety. Current technology applications in all three priority areas of highway safety (occupant protection, impaired driving and speed enforcement) could be much more widely used, helping reduce total motor vehicle-related fatalities and injuries.

Seat belt reminder systems are one technology that could increase safety belt use rates. Such systems provide visual and auditory cues to the driver that remind him/her to buckle up. Preliminary findings from IIHS's 2002 study of the Ford Motor Company's Belt Minder™ system showed that the system increased safety belt use by 7percent.⁶ Part-time users are particularly good target audiences for such systems since they are inclined to wear safety belts on long trips or inclement weather but don't use them on short trips. The reminders would help part-time users habituate the use of safety belts on every trip. In order to allow widespread use of such systems, Congress would have to lift current statutory prohibitions against safety belt reminder systems longer than eight seconds.

Ignition interlocks are a very promising technology in the impaired driving area. These are breath testing devices linked to a vehicle's ignition system. A driver must blow into the device before starting the car. The car will not start if the driver's BAC level is above a pre-set level. Research has shown that ignition interlocks are 90 percent effective when they are on the vehicle⁷ and that the longer they remain on the vehicle, the less likely the person is to recidivate. Forty-five states currently allow the use of ignition interlocks although they are mandatory in only twenty of those states. The ignition interlock laws in the latter group of states would have to be strengthened, and the five states without such laws would have to enact them. Other advanced technologies are being studied by a consortium of public and private entities as part of MADD's Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving. GHSA is very supportive of and is participating in this Campaign.

Automated enforcement holds tremendous promise for both red light running and speed enforcement. Such systems supplement traditional law enforcement and are especially useful in dangerous locations (including high crash locations) where it would be unsafe for law enforcement personnel to operate. With red light automated enforcement systems, cameras are triggered only when the driver enters the intersection on a yellow light after a set period of time. The cameras are not surveillance cameras. Most red light running systems are also set up so that they are not revenue generators. Vendors are reimbursed a monthly flat fee basis, and revenue from the citations is used to support the program. In France, where automated enforcement is widely deployed, the cameras have contributed to the 35percent reduction in motor vehicle fatalities. Britain and Australia⁸ have also successfully utilized automated enforcement.

A 2005 study by the Federal Highway Administration⁹ found a modest aggregate benefit of red light running systems. Other studies have shown more substantial benefits.¹⁰ Preliminary

⁶ Transportation Research Board, *Buckling Up: Technologies to Increase Seat Belt Use, Special Report 278*, p. 63 (2003).

⁷ Marques, P.R., ed. *Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices Vol. II: Research, Policy, and Program Status 2005*, International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety, www.icadts.org/reports/AlcoholInterlockReport2.pdf (2005)

⁸ Proceeding from a One-Day International Workshop on Automated Speed Enforcement, Sunday October 8, 2006, London, England\

⁹ *Safety Evaluation of Red-Light Cameras*, FHWA-HRT-05-048, Federal Highway Administration (April 2005).

¹⁰ IIHS, Automated Enforcement. *IIHS Status Report 37(5)*. Arlington, VA: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. (2002)www.hwysafety.org/sr/pdfs/sr3705.pdf

IIHS . Q&A: Red Light Cameras. Arlington, VA: Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (2005) www.iihs.org/research/qanda/rlr.html

analysis of the automated speed enforcement pilot project in Scottsdale, AZ has shown substantial benefits.¹¹

More than 150 communities currently allow automated red light enforcement. In addition to Scottsdale's pilot program, the District of Columbia has a freeway automated speed enforcement program, and Illinois has a freeway work zone automated enforcement program. Eighteen cities have automated speed enforcement programs, and Montgomery County, MD just instituted a program. For automated enforcement to be more widely deployed, many states would have to authorize the use of such systems.

While these technologies are all currently available and all hold great promise, it should be noted that they are not the panacea to the highway safety problem. The legal, political and institutional barriers to implementation are sizeable and can delay deployment by long periods of time. Short term solutions to highway safety problems will still be necessary. GHSA strongly believes in these technologies but we are also realistic about the ability of states and localities to implement them.

E. Support A Comprehensive Approach to Safety

Highway safety is a complex issue, and no single federal highway safety grant program can solve all facets of the problems. Nor does any one single state or local agency have the sole responsibility for addressing highway safety problems.

State departments of transportation have jurisdiction over state roads and can implement low cost improvements to enhance the safety of those roads. DOT's are required under the Section 148 program to develop a program of projects identifying which safety infrastructure improvements to fund. The program of projects must be incorporated into the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).

State highway safety offices are responsible for implementing programs to improve the safety of drivers and other road users. SHSO's must develop an annual Highway Safety Plan that outlines how the state intends to spend its 402 and incentive grant allocations.

State MCSAP administrators are responsible for improving the safety of motor carriers through inspections and enforcement. They must produce an annual Motor Carrier Safety Plan identifying how the state will use its MCSAP funds.

In addition, there are a myriad of other agencies involved in specific aspects of highway safety. State and local law enforcement agencies enforce state and local highway laws and regulations. State motor vehicle licensing agencies implement state driver and motorcycle licensing laws and handle licensing and motor vehicle registration data. State and local emergency medical services (EMS) lower the motor vehicle mortality rate by promptly responding to crashes when they occur. Metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) conduct special safety studies, implement safety campaigns, and incorporate safety infrastructure program of projects into their Transportation Improvement Plans (TIP). County engineers and public works directors control local roads and make safety improvements on those roads. Courts, prosecutors, judges, probation and treatment personnel are involved in handling impaired driving, speeding, and other safety-related cases. Railroads work with state DOT's to improve the safety of grade crossings. Transit authorities provide alternative transportation to the elderly and the impaired as well as school transportation

Speed Cameras: An Effectiveness and Policy Review" David K. Willis, Centerfor Transportation Safety, Texas A&M, (May 2006)

Pilkington, P. and Kinra, S. Effectiveness of speed cameras in preventing road traffic collisions and related casualties: systematic review. *British Medical Journal* 330, pp. 331-334, (2005)

¹¹ Washington, S. et. al., Evaluation of the City of Scottsdale Loop 101 Photo Enforcement Demonstration Program, prepared for the AZ Department of Transportation (Jan. 2007)

for school-aged children. State motorcycle advisory committees in some states provide motorcycle training and education. State departments of public health typically implement programs to encourage child restraint and bicycle helmet usage.

Under the Section 148 program, states are required to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) that brings all of these agencies together to set statewide highway safety goals, identify safety emphasis areas and coordinate the various state safety funds and plans. To date, more than thirty states have an approved SHSP and all are expected to have them by the end of the fiscal year.

Gains in highway safety, perhaps significant gains, are possible if all federal, state and local resources are brought to bear on a single set of state goals and if duplicative efforts and ineffective strategies are eliminated. It is critical, therefore, that the strategic highway safety planning requirements be continued and strengthened. States should be required, for example, to periodically update their SHSP's and to include state and local agencies that may not have been included in the initial version of the SHSP. States should be given additional technical assistance to ensure that the plans are implemented and are not just paperwork exercises.

F. Improve Motor Vehicle-Related Data Systems

In 1993, Congress enacted the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA). Since that time, the federal government has moved toward a more performance based approach in its programs. SAFETEA-LU continued this approach by authorizing behavioral incentive grant programs based on performance criteria. SHSO's have embraced the performance-based approach by using performance-related data to identify their highway safety problems, set performance goals, select countermeasures and monitor progress toward reaching their goals. Without adequate data, an SHSO cannot optimally plan and program its highway safety funding and determine how well it is performing. Without adequate data, Congress cannot determine whether federal resources are being spent wisely.

Every state collects crash data through Police Accident Reports, and every state collects fatality through the federally-funded FARS program. Many states are moving to automate their crash data systems and most are moving to collect the crash data elements recommended by the Model Minimum Uniform Crash Criteria (MMUCC) Guideline. Very few states, however, have adequate data on crashes on local roads. Few have good data to help them locate crashes on state or local roads. States collect emergency medical services data but most haven't automated that data system. Most states are moving toward collection of the recommended data elements under the National EMS Information System (NEMIS). Thirty states are participating in the Crash Outcome Data Evaluation System (CODES) data linkage program funded by NHTSA, but many participating states have difficulty linking their crash data to confidential hospital records. Some states have moved toward e-citation systems, but many more states and localities need to do so. States collect voluminous data on driver licensing and driver history but there is no single system for electronic exchange of that data between states except for Commercial Driver Licensing data. (The National Driver Registry is a pointer system that electronically "points" one state to the records of another.) Most states do not have DUI information systems that allow them to electronically link an offender with an arrest record, a driver history, a citation, and a judicial case file. Clearly there is much more that needs to be done to ensure that states and localities have timely, accurate, reliable and accessible data systems.

A small amount of funding for data improvements was authorized under SAFETEA-LU as the Section 408 program (23 U.S.C. 408). The incentive grant program has encouraged states to conduct traffic records assessments, develop strategic plans to address weaknesses identified in the assessments and establish Traffic Records Coordinating Committees (TRCC). The purpose of the TRCC is to encourage coordination of all traffic safety data systems and to plan future improvements to those systems in a way that meets the needs of multiple data users.

The 408 program has been successful to date, given its limited objectives. It is too small, however, to enable states to actually implement the data system improvements identified in their strategic traffic records plans. Software and hardware improvements are extremely costly to implement. Pennsylvania, for example, spent \$10 million to improve its crash data system and, despite that sizeable investment, the system still has problems. Although state DOT's may elect to spend their HSIP and Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds on data improvements, competing highway construction needs often preclude the state DOT from doing so.

In order to be able to determine what the highway safety problems are at the state and local level and how well the jurisdictions are addressing those problems, Congress must place a higher priority on data system improvements and authorize much more funding for those purposes.

G. Support State Programs Through Research, Training, and Administrative Changes

Over the last several years, the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) has funded the development of twenty-three guidebooks to help states implement the recommendations of the AASHTO Strategic Highway Safety Plan. (That Plan is a comprehensive one that served as the basis for the SHSP requirement in the Section 148 program.) The guidebooks (of which seventeen have been published to date) describe both infrastructure and behavioral countermeasures that can improve highway safety and which are proven, tried or experimental. It has been estimated that only 20percent of the countermeasures in the guidebooks have been proven -- the rest are tried or experimental. In their plans and programs, states and localities are using a limited number of evidence-based behavioral highway safety programs. They need much more research on countermeasures beyond those that are already proven effective.

NHTSA's behavioral research budget is approximately \$7 million. As a result, it can take years for research topics to reach the head of the funding que. FHWA's safety research budget has been chopped from approximately \$9-10 million before SAFETEA to approximately \$5 million currently. Congress must increase the size of the research budgets of federal safety-related agencies.

As noted previously, SAFETEA-LU authorized eight behavioral grant programs. Each of these programs has different requirements and application deadlines.

Key Dates in Annual Cycle of Submission from States to NHTSA

Due Date	Program Request
When law is in effect and being enforced	New Primary Law State Section 406 Certification*
December 31	Closeout of GTS financial reports from prior fiscal year
December 31	Annual Report from prior fiscal year
February 15	Section 405 Occupant Protection Incentive Grant Application
March 1 (no later than)	Safety Belt Use Survey Results from prior calendar year **
June 15	Section 408 Data Improvement Incentive Grant Application
July 1	Pre-2003 Primary Law State Section 406 Certification
July 1	Section 1906 Racial Profiling Incentive Grant Application
July 1	Section 2011 Child Safety & Child Booster Seats Incentive Application
August 1	Section 410 Alcohol Impaired Driving Incentive Grant Application
August 1	Section 2010 Motorcycle Safety Incentive Grant Application
September 1	Section 402 Performance Plan, Highway Safety Plan, Certifications and Program Cost Summary
September 30 Or when law is enacted	Section 164 Repeat Intoxicated Driver Law Certification
September 30 Or when law is enacted	Section 154 Open Container Law Certification

Source: NHTSA

Current fiscal year funds for five of the incentive grant programs are allocated at the very end of the fiscal year, and states are forced to carry over the funding into the following fiscal year. They

can't adequately plan for those funds because they don't know if they will be grant recipients until very late in the fiscal year. More importantly, the myriad of deadlines forces the limited SHSO staff to spend much of the year writing grant applications instead of implementing behavioral highway safety programs. Congress should consolidate and simplify the grant programs. At a minimum, Congress should ensure that there is a single application deadline (e.g. August 1 of the prior fiscal year) for all grant programs and that all funds are allocated on October 1 of the fiscal year.

Congress should also ensure that there is greater flexibility among the grant programs so that SHSO's and DOT's can move the funding to where it is most needed. Although the drafters of SAFETEA-LU espoused funding flexibility, it has, in fact, not materialized. Under SAFETEA-LU, the Section 406 safety belt performance incentive grant program, recipients can use all but \$1 million of the grant funds for any purpose under Title 23. Many 406 recipients have utilized this flexibility provision to fund a variety of highway construction projects. Under the Section 148 HSIP, states can flex up to 10percent of their grant funds to carry out safety projects "under any other section as provided in the State strategic highway safety plan if the State certifies that" it has no unmet rail grade crossing and safety infrastructure needs. Despite FHWA's best efforts to broadly interpret this provision, few, if any states, have been able to overcome such a high hurdle. As a result, the flexibility of safety funds is one way – from a behavioral highway safety program into highway construction.

Finally, Congress should recognize that if states are to appropriately expend federal highway safety funding and implement effective programs, they need a workforce that is trained on how best to accomplish that objective. FHWA has estimated that nearly 40 percent of the state and local transportation workforce is between the ages of 45 and 64 and that, in the next decade, nearly 50 percent of all transportation workers (mostly in middle and upper management) will begin to retire.

Transportation safety professionals face an even more serious crisis. There are currently few university programs or professional certificate programs to train incoming transportation safety professionals, and no training programs that focus on the integrated, comprehensive nature of highway safety.¹² As a result, new highway safety professionals are not fully prepared for their jobs. Unless there are changes in training for new safety professionals, the schism between safety infrastructure and behavioral safety will be perpetuated, and it will continue to be difficult to implement comprehensive highway safety programs. Congress must recognize this problem and fund capacity building programs for current employees in state DOTs and SHSOs as well as training programs for incoming safety professionals.

H. Provide Adequate Resources and Encourage Leadership

All of these recommendations will, of course, require more resources. While behavioral safety programs received a sizeable boost under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), they were only modestly increased under SAFETEA-LU. It's time to double the resources for behavioral programs, just as funding for safety infrastructure programs was doubled under SAFETEA-LU.

More importantly, however, these recommendations will require leaders at the federal level and state level who will recognize the importance of highway safety, fight for more resources, work against vocal minorities, and set a positive course for the future. Highway safety can no longer be treated as simply a factor to be balanced against the need for greater mobility. The risk of being killed or injured in a motor vehicle crash can no longer be accepted as a part of daily life. Highway safety must be recognized for what it is – a major public health problem that is a leading cause of death and injury in this country costing billions of dollars a year. If there is active leadership to address this problem, then resources will be sure to follow.

¹² National Cooperative Highway Research Program, Research Results Digest 302, *Core Competencies for Highway Safety Professionals* (March 2006)