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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
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WHITE HOUSE CEREMONY FOR NATIONAL DRUNK AND DRUGGED DRIVING AWARENESS WEEK
WASHINGTON, D.C.
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I am delighted to join with you in the official kick-off of National Drunk and Drugged Driving Awareness Week. For the fifth consecutive year, Congress has set aside a time for all Americans to reflect upon an urgent cause -- the battle against drunk and drugged driving. And it's no coincidence that this special week occurs during the season when we attend many parties and celebrate the holidays with co-workers, family and friends.

We are here because we want that special circle of family and friends to remain unbroken. We do not want to see that circle diminished because of a nightmare that can be prevented -- a tragedy caused by drunk or drugged driving. We are here to reaffirm our willingness to continue the battle and to recognize and thank some special people who have joined us in that effort.

There are no limits to the creativity or talent of men and women fired with the ideal of righting a wrong...of making America a better place. During this decade we have seen time and time again what happens when the public and private sector pool resources to tackle and solve tough problems. And our efforts to end the preventable casualties -- many of which were once accepted as part of the price for travel on our highways -- is no exception.

The people in this room have played an important role in this effort and your hard work and dedication are an inspiration to us all. Thank Jim Aducci, Chairman of the National Commission Against Drunk Driving. We've heard from David Stern about TEAM, and the tremendous efforts put forth by Jerry Sachs and Rich Benson in getting TEAM off the ground. And now we are all excited that Major League Baseball, under Commissioner Peter Ueberoth, has joined with the National Basketball Association as a member of TEAM. I'm delighted that Dr. Bobby Brown has brought us this great news. Last

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season, 47 million baseball tickets were sold in the 26 cities that host major league baseball. As the TEAM project grows, more and more people will get the life-saving message that it imparts.

While drunk driving is still a very serious problem, once again the combination of public and private sector efforts has played a large role in reducing fatalities. The national campaign against drunk driving has been the hallmark of our highway safety initiatives. It's a prime example of the success which public and private sector partnerships can achieve. Particularly heartening is the active effort to involve our young people. While the list is too long to mention everyone, I would like to recognize Reader's Digest for presenting over one million dollars in college scholarships to students who created effective radio and television advertising spots against drunk driving, designed to appeal to their own age group. Also, the Advertising Council's production of creative Public Service Announcements has delivered our message to millions of Americans. The Council's ad featuring Michael Jackson's music, for example, is one of the most powerful I've ever seen.

So many SADD chapters, like Rhonda Leavenworth's, are concerned that students lead all other age groups in drunk driving deaths, across the country and they are determined that their generation of students will end this most dubious distinction. Groups such as MADD -- Mothers Against Drunk Driving, RID -- Remove Intoxicated Drivers, and others have also played an enormously important role.

And all Americans are fortunate to have a president and first lady with such strong commitments to saving lives and fighting drug and alcohol abuse. This is the fifth consecutive year that President Reagan has made a special point to participate in these ceremonies, underscoring the paramount importance of this week.

The results of the national campaign against drunk driving have been phenomenal. In 1985, alcohol involvement in fatal highway crashes continued to decline in all age groups. Virtually every state has adopted tough new anti-drunk driving laws. Enforcement agencies are cracking down. Communities are showing concern through rehabilitative programs. But more important, the incidence of drunk driving has decreased dramatically since 1980 because folks all across the country have joined forces and put the pressure on -- and we're going to keep the screws tightened. We will not permit the momentum to die down. As they say, we're on a roll -- and that's the way it's going to stay!

By raising public consciousness about highway safety and demonstrating that we can make a difference, I believe our campaigns against drunk driving helped lay the foundation for passage of state safety belt and child safety seat laws. In just a few years, 24 states have passed seat belt laws and every state has seen the wisdom of requiring child safety seats, which cut fatalities by sixty percent.

No other society is so willing to join together for the common good as ours. You are part of a highway safety movement that broke through our national consciousness during this decade with explosive force -- caring Americans like you forming networks all across the country with the express purpose of saving lives.

No goal could be more beneficial for all Americans than to rid our roads and highways of every last drunk and drugged driver. Our common goal is an ambitious one, but with your continued support and heartfelt commitment, we will continue to make a difference -- a positive difference -- in people's lives.

Thank you and God bless you as you continue to give so much for others.