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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
AT THE SENATE WIVES LUNCHEON
WASHINGTON, D.C.
SEPTEMBER 28, 1983

I am delighted that you could come here today. I know that you are probably the busiest people in Washington.

I asked you here because I need your help.

There is a story about old Alben Barkley, for many years Kentucky's senior Senator and later Harry Truman's Vice President. Barkley was in constant demand as an after-dinner speaker -- especially by his fellow Senators. Yet, whenever, he actually attended one of these functions, he had a curious way of heaping praise on the honoree.

"I'm here tonight because there is nothing in the world I wouldn't do for Senator Blank," he used to say. "On the other hand, there's nothing in the world he wouldn't do for me. That's the way it's been during our twenty years in the Senate together. I haven't done anything for him, and he hasn't done anything for me."

Of course, Alben Barkley was speaking tongue-in-cheek. I can't imagine a group in this city who would do more for each other than the Senate wives -- whether in our official or unofficial guise. For one thing, we have a unique set of problems that confront us -- sometimes in private, more often in the glare of publicity.

I need your support on the two issues which rank among my top priorities at DOT:

- getting the drunk driver off our highways
- getting more drivers to wear their safety belts.

-more-

I am particularly concerned about our young people -- the fact sheet enclosed with the other materials you received, speaks for itself. Inexperience behind the wheel, combined with risk-taking behavior and increased exposure during high-accident driving times are all factors contributing to the tragic reality that our 15-24 year olds are the only age group for which life expectancy has not increased over the past 75 years.

Involving young people themselves is essential if we are to move beyond publicity to solutions.

In keeping with this philosophy, I joined the Secretaries of Education and Agriculture as cosponsors of the Department of Health and Human Services Conference on Teenage Drunk Driving held in Washington last March.

We will sponsor two national Project Graduation conferences next February and March. Three students from each of the participating states will help generate public awareness and support of the alcohol and traffic safety program (which originated in Maine in 1978) to prevent alcohol-related deaths and injuries during prom and graduation time.

NHTSA has published an Alcohol and Safety Belt Youth Guide which is the result of workshops held with high school and college students. A special staff will collect and facilitate the exchange of information among community groups who are experimenting with the kinds of programs and systematic approaches outlined in the guide.

Additionally, NHTSA is working closely with experts from national youth, alcohol, and safety organizations to identify successful intervention, prevention and treatment programs.

We are also encouraging model community programs and supporting "targets of opportunity" at 10 selected sites across the country.

All of these programs are constructive. But what this campaign lacks in sufficient degree is the personal touch of seasoned campaigners who are dedicated, committed and energetic. Whatever support you can lend this effort -- individually or collectively -- will be greatly appreciated, I can assure you.

I ask you to search for innovative approaches by states and private sector organizations.

Also, I look forward to the show Chemical People on November 2nd and 9th in which communities across the nation will have the opportunity to join together to combat school age drug and alcohol abuse as the program is broadcast. This unique television event combines two one-hour network programs with action -- the assembly of concerned citizens in communities all across America.

So I urge you to join yet another campaign. The platform is right -- highway safety. The constituents we support deserve our best efforts -- they are our nation's children. The campaign workers -- with your help -- will be the finest and most energetic in the country.

Thank you for whatever you can do.