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News:

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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY
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NATIONAL CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY AWARENESS WEEK NEWS CONFERENCE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
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I am delighted to join with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the National Passenger Safety Association and the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association in the kick-off of National Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week. This week reminds all of us that children are our most precious resource, and as adults we have the enormous responsibility of ensuring that our children are kept out of harm's way.

Using a child car seat is an act of love -- an investment in the health and safety of your child -- and it's required by law in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. DOT research indicates that child seats, when properly installed, reduce the risk of death or serious injury for young children by about 70 percent.

The latest statistics demonstrate that the American people are getting the message. Restraint usage for children under five has risen from just 15 percent in 1979 to 75.8 percent last year. And in New York State, we found 78 percent of the children riding with drivers who buckled up were themselves restrained. These are impressive figures, but we can't be satisfied yet. For the sake of our children, it is imperative that children be placed in child safety seats every time they are in the car. And because even the best safety device cannot be effective if used improperly, the seats must be installed and used correctly. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's recent 19-city survey shows that 25 percent of child safety seats are installed incorrectly. That's an improvement over past years, but again, we must do better. Misused child seats are of little or no value in protecting children in auto crashes. Parents must know that a misused child safety seat can be dangerous. Later in today's program, you will see demonstrations of common misuses and proper use of car seats. It takes only a minute to ensure your child is properly secured in the car

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seats; it may be the most important minute you may ever spend with your child.

Please use child safety seats on each and every trip, and carefully follow the manufacturer's directions for correct usage. And help protect yourself and the other members of your family by wearing safety belts every time you travel by car. As the theme for this conference says, "Why gamble with your most precious possession?"

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