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REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELIZABETH HANFORD DOLE
ALL AMERICAN BUCKLE UP KICKOFF
MAY 18, 1987
WASHINGTON, D. C.

WHAT A JOY TO BE HERE WITH ALL OF YOU TO CELEBRATE THIS VERY IMPORTANT OCCASION --THE LAUNCHING OF ALL AMERICAN BUCKLE UP WEEK. THIS AUDIENCE REPRESENTS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS IN THE COUNTRY TODAY. AND THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT REASONS FOR OUR SUCCESS ARE: SUPPORT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT, COOPERATION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS AND THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE CHILDREN OF OUR NATION.

IT WAS AN INDIANA STATE POLICEMAN, SGT. JOHN MULL, WHO ORIGINATED THE CONCEPT OF THE ALL AMERICAN BUCKLE UP IN 1983, BUT STATE POLICEMEN ALL ACROSS OUR COUNTRY -- INCLUDING THOSE HERE TODAY -- HAVE KEPT THE VIGIL AND DONE AN OUTSTANDING JOB FOR SAFETY BELT SUCCESS.

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION HAS TAKEN THE LEAD FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. AS DIANE STEED KNOWS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN PUT INTO PLACE ALL THE SAFETY REGULATIONS IN THE WORLD, BUT ONLY PEOPLE CAN MAKE THEM WORK. AND YOU IN THE BUCKLE UP CAMPAIGN HAVE DONE JUST THAT. THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNOR'S HIGHWAY SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE, THE NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL, OPERATION C.A.R.E. AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE VERY BEST OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, HAVE WORKED TOGETHER ON OUR STREETS AND HIGHWAYS, IN OUR STATE HOUSES, IN THE TELEVISION STUDIOS AND MEETING HALLS -- ANYWHERE PEOPLE GATHER -- TO GET THE MESSAGE OUT THAT SAFETY BELTS SAVE LIVES, NOW.

ALL OF YOU DESERVE A LION'S SHARE OF THE CREDIT FOR A JOB WELL DONE.

AND, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT THE ENTHUSIASM OF CHILDREN FOR SAFETY IS OUR STRONGEST ASSET. I'M DELIGHTED TO SEE STUDENTS HERE FROM BROWNE ACADEMY IN VIRGINIA AND ADAMS COMMUNITY SCHOOL IN WASHINGTON, D. C. THE WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF WASHINGTON, D.C., AND KEY LARGO ELEMENTARY OF KEY LARGO, FLORIDA. THEY ARE TYPICAL OF THE ADVOCATES OF SAFETY AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE. OF ALL THE MAIL I RECEIVE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION THE MOST GRATIFYING COMES FROM YOUNG PEOPLE EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT HIGHWAY SAFETY. A 13-YEAR-OLD BOY FROM MAPLESVILLE, ALABAMA, JUST SUMMED IT UP WHEN HE WROTE ME IN MARCH "I AM THE ONLY ONE IN MY FAMILY WHO PUTS ON A SAFETY BELT AND I TRY TO TELL PEOPLE TO WEAR THEM...I THINK THE MESSAGE IS GETTING OUT...AND I'M GOING TO DO EVERYTHING I CAN." BECAUSE CHILDREN CARE, THIS CAMPAIGN WILL CONTINUE TO SUCCEED.

THESE YOUNG PEOPLE HERE TODAY ALSO REPRESENT THE LIVES THAT COULD BE SAVED IF EVERYONE BUCKLED THEIR SAFETY BELT. IMAGINE EACH ONE OF THEM REPRESENTING 100 LIVES THAT COULD BE SAVED EACH YEAR IF EVERYONE WORE THEIR SAFETY BELTS EACH AND EVERY TIME THEY RIDE IN A CAR. THAT'S HOW YOU CAN ENVISION THE POTENTIAL FOR OUR SUCCESS.

I KNOW I DON'T HAVE TO TELL ANYONE HERE THIS MORNING THAT CONSISTENT USE OF SAFETY BELTS AND CHILD SAFETY SEATS ARE THE BEST DEFENSE AGAINST DRUNK AND DRUGGED DRIVERS.

AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN WE ARE GOING TO KEEP WORKING UNTIL WE TOGETHER GET EVERY LAST DRUNK DRIVER OFF THE ROADS AND HIGHWAYS OF THIS COUNTRY.

THE OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE IS MOUNTING. AT THIS TIME 27 STATES PLUS THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HAVE SAFETY BELT USE LAWS AND ALL 50 STATES PLUS THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA HAVE CHILD SAFETY SEAT LAWS. A RECENT STUDY SHOWED THE NUMBER OF FRONT-SEAT VEHICLE OCCUPANTS KILLED IN TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS DECLINED BY 8.7 PERCENT IN THE FIRST EIGHT STATES TO ENACT SAFETY BELT USE LAWS. AND THE RATE FELL 9.9 PERCENT IN NEW YORK AND TEXAS.

THE RESULTS ARE GREAT: WE ARE MORE SAFETY CONSCIENCE. PEOPLE'S LIVES ARE BEING SAVED AND CRIPPLING, DISABLING INJURIES ARE BEING REDUCED. SO LET'S TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS ALL AMERICAN BUCKLE UP CHALLENGE. LET'S ALL JOIN TOGETHER AND BUCKLE UP AMERICA. AND LET'S DEMONSTRATE HOW SERIOUSLY WE TAKE THIS THEME. I'D LIKE YOU TO JOIN ME AS WE "BUCKLE UP AMERICA.