

Distracted Driving Summit
U.S. Department of Transportation
Washington, DC
30 September - 01 October 2009

Notes: Day Two

Congressional Presentation Intro by John Porcari, Deputy Secretary U.S. Dept. of Transportation

Senator Mark Pryor, AK

He has been a member of the Senate since 2003, sits on the Rules and Ethics, Commerce, science and Transportation, and Homeland Security Committees, along with being a member of the of the Subcommittees in Aviation, Transportation, and Consumer Products and Safety. He plays a leading role in developing public safety policy. His involvement in this area began when neighbors were killed ¼ mile from home in a head on collision by a texting driver. Law in home state is now in effect to ban texting. We are seeing more and more of this around the country. As soon as we get a NHTSA directive, he would like to do a hearing in the Commerce committee because these stats we have been seeing are startling. While he appreciates what the states are doing, he feels a national role is needed. That would be to examine data, put out PSAs in schools and enact awareness campaigns.

Senator Robert Menendez, NJ

Earlier this year he helped develop a bill in NJ to ban texting. He entered public life at age 19 and became a U.S. Senator in 2006. Distracted driving is an epidemic finally getting the attention it deserves. According to AAA, 50% of all teens text while driving. Harvard study says 2000 deaths could be prevented. The advent of cell phone usage has surpassed the problem of drinking and driving. Texting is an even deadlier threat. Reality is that any vehicle on the road being operated while the operator is texting, turns into a deadly weapon. VA Tech Institute Transportation Study shows that a driver is 23 times more likely to crash while texting. Currently 36 of our states do not ban texting. The Alert Drivers Act will change this and require states to pass texting bans or risk losing highway funding. This will save young lives and the lives of those around them. Driving is a privilege and with that comes responsibility, not only to yourself but to all others around you on the road. We need to act now, before we look back with regret in the face of imminent danger. Thinks it was wrong that those in the past who were called upon to study this and were denied. Companies like Verizon, for the past seven years have taken an active lead in NJ trying to address this issue.

Questions/Discussion John Westmore, Pedestrians.Org What is the role of fed gov and what can we expect states and localities to do? On federal level bills like the Alert Drivers Act is a great example. If states enact primary laws like many did with seat belts, they may get more money in a hurry. More funding for primary laws, less with secondary. 90% of people in this country have a cell phone. If the ADA passes, would it continue funding to primary only laws? Yes, but would allow the states a reasonable amount of time to put those laws in place. Next question from a gentleman who lost his daughter, a sophomore at the University of WI to a distracted driver. In her memory, a foundation was established dedicated 100% to distracted driving. There are three components laws, which are punitive in nature, and technology and education which are non-punitive. What are you doing to focus on education? This has to be a multi-faceted approach. You can have a law and people will still violate it. We are looking at proposals to get the education out, at drivers' ed and even earlier in health classes. Nothing formal in the Senate yet, but

education will play a key role. We need to do a PR campaign, all around PSAs, work with wireless companies and start education early in the schools. Verizon and Ford have been early proponents - example Ford Synche technology. But it all must be looked at carefully because even though technology is aimed to help us, it may be distracting as well. Jeff Lawson, MA Safe Roads Alliance - Can you talk about texting legislation in front of you now? What are the pitfalls and support? It will be looked at closely in Committee. There may be some opposition, we don't know really until the bill starts to move. Whenever we impose the possibility of losing highway funding for not doing a certain action, there is always some opposition to it. This issue not only costs families that are left behind, but society as a whole with the associated rising health care costs. In the end, we should reach consensus. How does texting/cell phone distractions compare with all other forms of distractions? Texting is in a class by itself, but the whole picture should be looked at. Texting is the ultimate evil in this picture because you can't text without looking at it and you can't text without using your hands. It is hard to watch out for other drivers on the road when your eyes are not on the road. Will the DOT infrastructure answer to distracted driving problem include rumble strips, soft barriers, etc. In the reauthorization bill? Don't know as of yet as we are currently distracted by health care. Later this year or early next, the bill will be heard in three different committees, and we will work with the DOT to look at these things.

Moderator: Peter Rogoff, Administrator - Federal Transit Administration

(This panel session will review legislative and regulatory approaches for addressing distracted driving; evaluations of the impact of such measures; enforcement issues; and public attitudes towards the issue.) He has a confession to make. This morning while on his way here he read about 14 emails, sent six responses and made two cell calls, but did it on the METRO. The risk lies with the operation of vehicles. People opt to drive instead of using public transit to save 10 - 15 minutes off of their commute. But in reality, when you get in the office, at least your first and last half hour of the day are spent addressing emails, which if you did so on bus or train, could actually allow you extra time with your family. We are focused on electronic devices as it relates to operations of transit vehicles. In the Federal Railroad Administration, all devices are barred from even being in the cab through federal regulations. At present, the Federal Transit Administration is prohibited from regulating this by law and Secretary LaHood is taking strides to try to change this. What does it take to get legislation passed? How can we enforce it? Next speaker, John D'Amico has been very effective in passing legislation that changed the young driver's time from 25 to 50 hours behind the wheel, graduated licensing, passed cell phone bans in school zones and construction projects and because of his efforts, parents can now view their child's driving record on line.

John D'Amico, Representative - IL General Assembly He became involved because 16 year old neighbor boys were killed and that was how graduated licensing was started. They wanted to raise the age to 18, while that didn't pass, it got people talking and raised awareness greatly. Subsequently a task force was started across the state involving all stakeholders to see what they could do. Six months after the bill was signed, teen fatalities dropped by 50%. In time teens will do the same with cells. In Illinois, texting will be illegal. There was opposition in the House. While many rose to speak against it, not one person had a good argument against it. In Chicago, there is a primary cell phone ban, but it is not a moving violation. If you really want to stop texting, you must have a bill with teeth in it. We also need to work with the press as they can be very instrumental in getting bills passed. Important to work in conjunction with law enforcement officers. They will be doing an undercover sting in a nearby IL community. Once the word gets out that is happening, people will start to wake up.

Bruce Starr, Senator - OR & Executive Committee National Conference of State Legislatures Serving in Oregon since 2002 in the Senate, and before that in the House. He Chairs the the Surface Transportation Working Group of the National conference of State

Legislators. He feels compelled to defend the role of the state legislature in relation to the federal government. Motor vehicle laws are under the purview of state government. The solution to our problems will not be a one size fits all approach. Each state must address its own needs. In 2001, 140 bills were introduced in the various states. Eight passed. In 2009, 209 bills have been up for consideration in 46 states. So far, 13 bills have passed. Clearly, there is momentum on texting. The fed gov can't force the states, but we have to work as partners. Threatening sanctions, as in the 25% withholding penalty is using the stick, not the carrot. Using incentives opposed to federal mandates/sanctions work well. There is an approach where we can get things done. One of the most important roles the federal government can play is in the area of research. We have studies, but not the hard data. In addition, an important partnership can be formed on the educational front. Technology is the villain and the saviour at the same time. It is causing many of the crashes, yet it will also be what aids the solution. I believe Congress can be instrumental in providing the next generation technology. A one size fits all approach rarely works.

Steve Farley, Representative - AZ House of Representatives He was one of the first legislators to introduce a texting while driving bill and is also an artist. The politics of driving while texting legislation in a Lebertarian legislature are somewhat complex. In Arizona, we do things differently and get mentioned on the Daily show a lot. They passed a bill to allow guns in bars, banks and day care, and it went into effect yesterday. It is illegal to drive with an unrestrained dog in the back of a pick up truck, but it is okay for a kid to do so unrestrained. Ideology defeats pragmatism. Not that AZ legislators are against traffic safety, just that they tend to come down on the side of rights. This may be changing as the public safety awareness is becoming more favorable. He introduced three bills. In 2007 it was quashed in committee. In 2008, it was attached to a germane bill that didn't have to deal with the committee chair who gave him problems the year before, and the bill made it to the floor. One Senator introduced 105 amendments in an attempt to kill it. Amendments were defeated, but an illegality occurred when discussion on the bill was stopped and never started up again. That is an illegality in that no other business is to be conducted before the discussion is resumed. Nevertheless, it was effective in keeping the bill from moving. This year it passed committee, but died on the floor. He believes next year is the year it will get done. "Let's not become a nanny state where everything has to be legislated and mandated" said the current director of the AZ governor's office of Highway Safety. Chair of the House Transportation Committee says we already have enough laws. Argument that we can't just single out texting when other behavior is just as dangerous. VA Tech study shoots that argument. Also enforcement is another argument, but not a strong one. Quite a few powerful allies, victims' families, city councils enacting bans on their own, media can also be a strong friend, AAA, medical, and wireless companies can all pull together. In conclusion, don't give up. Look for others who are also committed, appeal to the media, reach out to unexpected allies. We're saving lives here.

Major David Salmon, Director - Traffic Services Division, NY State Police Actively involved in enforcement of nation's first cell phone ban in NY. As member of Highway Commission of International Chiefs of Police, we really need and appreciate voice at this table. Oversees traffic safety and we have seen vast expansion since the nation's first law was in place. Not only to limit cell phones and distracted driving, because soon such laws will be antiquated. A more encompassing approach to distracted driving is necessary to give law enforcement the tools they need. 81,000 tickets were issued last year accounting for 81% of all tickets last year, but that is effective enough. This is also true of every single safety threat. Last year record low fatalities, not coincidentally record high enforcement. Secondary laws are not vigorously enforced. Laws must also be clear as well to be enforced well. Officer must believe it is dangerous as well as illegal to have effective enforcement. What is needed is the statutory authority that permits driving and driving

only as the primary objective of the driver. All else is distraction. Continuous 365 day a year, not simple campaigns are what is effective. We can't think of each social ill on an individual basis, we must commit to all on a 24 - 7 basis. There is also a financial burden with implementation of said laws. A well funded project has a far greater chance of success.

Vernon Betkey, Chairman - Governors Highway Safety Association & Director, MD Highway Safety Office Prior to this he served 25 years as a MD State Trooper. Legislate, regulate and enforce. Deaths and injuries are not only an epidemic, but a public health and safety issue. MD texting law went into effect today. GHSA distracted driving policies Electronic devices and texting ban, novice driver ban, Employer policies. They don't say you have to, but recommend individuals and employers take responsible action. Thirty-six years ago, distraction driving laws didn't exist, but distracted drivers still did. Negligent laws were in place. Still today, we can use existing laws. Legal challenges - legislation alone won't solve problem. Must be enforceable. Lack of public trust in distracted driving laws could spill over to other traffic safety laws. Experienced with speeding laws that people don't always obey. We don't have all of the answers, but a systematic approach, research, data, legislation, enforcement and adjudication, education, employer policies, technology and funding combined can make a difference. Also have to be careful that when we are investing in this we are not weakening our other campaigns.

Questions /Discussion

Bob Greene, Survive the Drive - High School started in 1999 and it is an advocacy campaign for graduated licensing with NHTSA. We've heard a lot about partnering with numerous entities over the past two days, but what is missing here is WHO (World Health Organization) and the UN. WHO projects that by 2020 traffic injuries/fatalities will be the third leading cause of death in the world. Dave Tietzer with the National Safety Council - How difficult is it to collect data on distracted driving given that bad data is worse than no data at all. We won't have good accident data for years. Will that hurt in passing state legislation? Can we elaborate more on sanctions vs. Incentives? Data relative to texting is clear and with that we should see things moving rapidly towards anti-texting laws. When fed gov mandates, certain states will get their heels up and go on a states rights vibe. Expect vast majority of the states will go along with the fed proposal. Legislators are still obligated to represent their constituents wishes even if they differ from what they believe is best. Steve Farley Federal mandate aspect will really cause a negative reaction in some states. On the flip side it is the only way to get national compliance. What technology is available to help enforcement, i.e. when seat belts first were pushed, the flashing light on the dash that would be annoying, or the buzzer, alcohol interlocks for DUI offenders? There is a variety of technology to detect distracted drivers and warning of the driver also. New cells being developed and marketed with GPS that detects movement and subsequently blocks usage, primarily geared towards young drivers. Do you see cell phones and drunk driving resulting in the same number of deaths? It is hard to get this data. It hasn't been fine tuned to that point yet. No question that type of impairment while texting is the same as drinking the only difference is that you can't look up and become stop being drunk. Dr. Ross Tealy (?) founding member of the first MADD chapter in Alabama. Presumably most offenders plead guilty and mail in the fine. Some must decide to fight. What was the legal theory they used to fight this offense? A very small percent choose to do so. We have to get the local justices on board to realize the severity or tickets are dismissed or summarily reduced. Judy Stove, Advocate for Highway and Auto Safety - We support the Shummer bill and sanctions because they work, however, you may want to include incentives in the bill. A model bill would be helpful - is there one? Some bills have good parts and some bad. It probably would be helpful, but each state works in its own way. As long as we get laws on the books, that is the main thing. You have to be careful when you throw something into a politically charged ideological legislature, you can open a new Pandora's box. It could backfire and instead go towards the 'cut government

down to size' mindset. What can we do to get the other 30 states to move forward with legislation? Part is to elivate the importance of the issue. Educate the public and the legislators. You have to comunicate the message, build coalitions, and allies and you will move forward. This summit will also help greatly. Concerned that discussion is primarily focused on teens - is this seen as a problem with all age groups? Teens are the most inexperienced drivers, but we do have to focus across the board. Good to focus model behavior on parrents. Brent Weilherd, Zero Fatalities - Many federal grants go to states for comprehensive DUI programs what will it take to have distracted driving looked at in the same light? That is what this summit is all about. The average driver is trained and tested once in their lives at the start of their driving lives. Could distracted driving be a part of reissuing of licenses when they are lost for some infraction? Yes, that is a possibility. Imre Sautzer - American Motorcyclist Association - Motorcyclists have been working at all levels to ensure that motor vehicle operators be held accountable to ALL roadway users, especially the most vulnerable ones. How do we ensure that motorcyclists are protected? There was little or no talk about this yesterday. Two panelists replied saying that all you have to do is show up. (LMW note: Thanks Imre. No doubt that if not for you motorcyclists wouldn't have even come into this equation. You're appreciated.) It was mentioned that there was enforcement in NY that revolves around undercover work, what are other ways? Routine patrol, police are ingenious about finding ways to enforce laws. On accident forms, would it be helpful to include an are to fill in for distracted driving? Yes. Greg Zaffke - His mother was killed while sitting at a stop sign by a woman who was going 50mph and painting her nails. There has been much discussion on the front end, but not much said about prosecution. Has mandating license removal been proposed in cases where a death results? "Taking a life should be life changing. My mother will never drive again. She won't see me get married or my children grow up." Why is a six month or so suspension adequate? Currently bills are out there for negligence. But it is so hard to prove negligence. We don't want to put out a bill that won't pass. Bills have been enacted to move over for emergency vehicles on ide of roadways, highway work zones, and enhanced penalties for violations. If there is more that we can do to protect these workers, we should look at it.

Youth Program

Moderator: Ann Shoket, Editor-in-Chief Seventeen Magazine

This panel will be more causal and much more personal than the rest of the presentations. Ann Shoket will interview three teens who are personally very involved with distracted driving. This are is very important. Car crashes are the number one casue of death among teens. All of their attention must be on the road. Is one text message worth loosing a life? New slogan should be 'Get a designated texter.' Reggie Shaw and Nicole Merdet will share their stories about texting while driving. Reggie Shaw - when he was 19 and living at home with his parents, he was driving to work and texting, which he had done many times before. He crossed the center line and killed two men upon impact. This has canged the lives of these families and his life forever. He doesn't want people to make the same mistake he did. He thinks about it all of the time. Since the crash, he has talked to many students about how this has affected him and these families. Video can be seen at www.zerofatalities.com Nicloe - last July was driving and texting and on an iPhone you can't feel the buttons, so she looked down to tell a friend that she was on her way over. She then felt the car going over something that wasn't the road, hit the medium at about 70mh, spun out five times and broke three barriers on the other side. Called her friend first because sa=cared and didn't know what to do, then called her folks and told them a bug had flown into the car, as her father warned her repeatedly about not texting while driving. Her mom, who is an insurance agent, said she heard that before and believed her and she got a new car. Felt guilty about it. This has changed her approach because now her phone is "usually" kept in a place where she keeps her change and is "usually" on silent

when she's in the car. (LMW note: God, I couldn't believe she said USUALLY!) Ann - Why is it okay to text and drive? Reggie - Comfortable with texting because he did it so many times before. Never taught any warnings in driver ed or knew how dangerous it really was. Nicole - Always knew it wasn't okay, but she felt she could do anything. She had been texting for five years prior to driving so she thought it was no big deal. When asked if she thought her friends learned anything from her experience, she really didn't think so. Many thought it was cool that she was in *Seventeen*. On the other hand, Reggie thinks his friends have learned from his experience and also those in the local community. Natalie ??? is a student activist. Ann - Do your friends get it? She thinks lots of them don't because they have the 'it won't happen to me' attitude. Shifting the focus to putting the phone on silent isn't a lame thing to do. Make it fun and cool. She was involved in creating a rap that will stick with people her age and some text type slogans. "DTJD" Don't text just drive. Get the 411 on the 116. Know the info about beginning drivers 1 teen driver 1 passenger for the first 6 months. Ann - There are so many ways you can be distracted, thinking about the hot girl/cute boy, changing CDs, figuring out where you are trying to get to, talking to friends, eating, and many other things and you have to tackle all of these aspects. Question from a group in Parkland, FL - TTYL Talk to you later - Many of our peers think they can multi-task and that texting is not dangerous. The British PSA is very graphic but shows how dangerous texting can be. We need a lot more in our faces. We need to air more and shouldn't be scared to put graphic messages on tv. Ann to Reggie - You said no one ever told you the great dangers of texting while driving. How can we spread the word to teens? He went to the Utah state legislators and spoke about how dangerous it really is. Subsequently, Utah passed the nation's toughest texting while driving bill - simply for getting caught texting while driving you can get up to 90 days in jail; if someone is killed in a crash up to 15 years in prison. It is important that laws are in place. Comment from girl with the Think First Program in Indiana four years ago, she crashed a SUV while on a cell phone because she thought the call was that important. Now she is paralyzed. Natalie suggested you have to change the mindset to make it okay to be a safe driver. Teens listen to their peers best. Doing something teens enjoy might not make it lame. Anne - there is a budget for a catchy phrase, slogan or jingle that could go national. Challenge issued from the Distracted Driving Summit to create a PSA for students to develop this. More info at www.Drivetolife.com Winner determined on 21 November 2009 and will get an all expense paid trip to NYC to develop this PSA, along with \$1,000 and two \$500 prizes also awarded.

Panel: Public Awareness and Education

(This panel will review initiatives to increase public awareness of safety issues such as distracted driving, and will review research regarding the effectiveness of such efforts.)

Moderator: Ron Medford, Acting Deputy Administrator - NHTSA NHTSA has published a research note that is available in hard copy and on their website, and encourage all to read it. This important panel will examine the importance public education can play. Over the past 30 years shifted perceptions and social norms and safe driving behavior, example how DUI has changed and how car booster seats have been accepted, but there are limits that education can have.

Chuck Hurley, Executive Director & CEO - Mothers Against Drunk Driving MADD has been one of NHTSA's strongest partners since its conception and have been involved in many campaigns over the past 30 years. Lessons of Effective Highway Safety Campaigns: There are 2 rules to follow. Rule 1- Peer reviewed data and FARS trump enthusiasm. Non-science based campaigns don't work, in fact they often displace what does. Evaluation is essential. Education alone does not always yield good results. Sometimes it even wastes valuable time and money. Put a face on the numbers. The public understands risk best on a human scale. Must be

real, but respectful. Victims clear voice present a strong picture. On a side note we should stop using the word "accident". Aristotle said, "Accidents are without cause." (LMW note: At least in this instance, a man after my own heart!) Air Bag and Safety Belt Campaign 24 child fatalities for airbags was the catalyst for his campaign) Good data driven model. True public partnering. Sought and followed the advice of IACP. Started by failure and ended in success. Followed the principal of if it isn't proven to work, don't do it. Closed the doors on this when the object was met. Employer and parent policies work. National clearing house is good clearing house. MADD's employee policies are a good model - Banning texting, hand held and should include enlightening discipline up to and including termination.

Rule 2 - When all else fails, go back to Rule 1

Sandy Spavone, Executive Director - National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS)
She will share how teens can be involved in bringing solutions to this problem: Peer to peer, enforcement support and advocacy. Cells, drivers licenses and keys are the three most important things to most teens. Parents have control of all three. In terms of dangerous conditions, teens rank cell usage second to icy road conditions, but 87% admit to still doing it. In a survey, it was questioned if a teen would be willing to speak up to the driver they were with if they didn't feel safe? 65% said they would do so if feeling unsafe because of texting, 45% said they would ask the driver to stop talking if they felt unsafe while driver was using cell for conversation. A comprehensive program is essential to behavior change. When teens present peer education, they have to reeducate each new class with each new school year. Youth speaking to youth is effective. Youth are creative when empowered. Parental involvement means fewer collisions. Check out www.underyourinfluence.com They want to be part of the solution

Ann Shoket, Editor-in-Chief - Seventeen Magazine

What has worked for us is DO NOT BE SUBTLE! Make it real. Put it in context. (Example in texting article in August 2009 issue, state facts - 50% of those we surveyed admitted they text while driving, one in four were in an accident because someone was texting while driving and the time teens are most likely to have an accident are between 3:00 and 6:00PM). For teens, friends and family matter most. Those are the people they listen to. Having an impact is what really matters in the end.

Janet Froetscher, President & C E O - National Safety Council

The National safety Council is a non-government entity, non profit and has over 20 thousand business partners. How the NSC thinks we can tackle this problem: Role of education - we learned from 'Click it or Ticket' campaign that education by itself does not change behavior. Educating legislators. Public support 57% support total bans on cell phones while driving. Hands free devices are not safer. Texting bans are insufficient because they don't address the leading cause of distraction-related crashes - phone conversations. (While texting may be a higher risk for crash, the time involved in conversations and the prevalence of usage of cell phones cause a higher quantity of crashes.) Educate business leaders. Safety leadership. Employers have an initiative to enact best practices, if only for financial reasons. Reduce risks - employees using cells are four times more likely to be in a crash. 500 members of the NSC have enacted a complete ban. Only seven saw a decrease in productivity, while 40 saw an increase. Educate parents. Teens are at the highest risk, complicated with being the least inexperienced and also easily distracted. Teens do listen and pay attention to what their parent have to say. Setting and enforcing rules critical. "On Road - Off Phone". Set a good example. Recommendations: Encourage legislators to enact laws that will be effective; Encourage employers to put policies in place; Encourage parents to set and enforce rules; and the federal, state and local governments and governmental agencies should follow Deb Hershman's lead and ban electronic devices in work related capacities.

Dr. Adrian Lund, President - Insurance Institute for Highway Safety Cell phone and texting is not happening because people believe it is risk free, Americans are generally oblivious.

Replay of the safety belt campaigns. In 1981 only 10 - 15% of Americans used seat belts. By 2008 it was up to about 85%. Two-thirds of the people surveyed in 1981 said they should wear seat belts, but only roughly 10% did. Public information is not only important, but critical because it can create and motivate policy makers and engineers. If enforcement is part of a policy, the public needs to know it is happening. Feedback is needed to validate the policy. Although critical in conjunction with other factors, information won't do much if anything by itself. Simply passing laws alone doesn't work in most cases. Also a decision will have to be made considering how much effect on personal choice can be justified.

Questions/Discussion

As a small business, I feel like David against Goliath. The major obstacle is that there are no set standards of safety proposals. There are over 650 different cell phones manufactured. A set standard will open doors. Not only can we develop solutions, but then we can bring them to the table and implement them immediately. Which cell phone providers will step up to the plate and develop these first? Problems with cell phones extend beyond distracted driving, you have accidents with distracted pedestrians, improper usage in the schools and smuggling them into prisons. We need solutions. Answer - Point taken. No response from any providers. The gentleman who spoke in an earlier question/discussion session whose daughter was killed suggested all should sign a pledge. It should state, "I promise to remember that everyone on the road is someone's son, daughter, father, mother, sister, brother, grandparent, etc. I promise to keep my eyes and mind on the road. I promise." Then sign and date. What about the feedback systems in cars that inform us of what our children are doing while in the cars? The more that we can keep the parents involved and the more the kids are aware that it is happening the more we can get the proper behavioral response. Panelist - while coming into the summit this morning, I counted 21 out of 40 drivers on K street on cell phones even though DC has a ban. His wife received a ticket on 21 April for the same thing. I remember the date well because the Councilman who introduced the ban, also received a ticket for same on the same date as his wife. Should be an example for the rest of our country. What can be done to close this gap? Strong enforcement is needed for laws to work. Socially we have become completely engrossed in being connected. Pedestrians and bicyclists are also a huge problem. We need broader discussion to include all. We need to start this education at the earliest age possible. Let's give our teachers the tools they need. Education alone on risk is not proven to work. We need to educate people on what is proven to work. The number one cause of on and off the job injuries to employees are traffic related. Drivers in 2003 were distracted about 16% of the time and has likely since increased. While increased risk hasn't seen the increased number of crashes. If we remove these devices, what assurances do we have that crashes will go down? No, we have no assurances. This is why we need to look and focus on distracted driving as a whole. How can we define the elements of skillful driving beyond crash avoidance? How can we recapture something like the National Driving Test that was on TV years ago, which was family fun and improved driving knowledge? From our exposure with courses (for violators who have to take a knowledge enhancement course to reduce points on license and/or retest), there is essentially no effect that they learn. They may learn how to avoid the ticket, but not necessarily how to avoid crashes. We need to find things that work.

Closing Remarks and Action Plan

Ray LaHood, Secretary - U.S. Department of Transportation

Secretary LaHood made his opening remarks about this summit being a start of a new way of addressing this problem. Thanks to all the participants. Keeping America safe is the federal government's highest priority. There are over 300 attendees here with us today and over 5000 tuned into the webcast. This shows that many share the same concerns. Your work will help to better address distracted driving in all areas and we will set a new course of action. President Obama just signed an Executive Order directing federal

employees not to text while driving government vehicles, use electronic equipment supplied by the government while driving, and not to use the same in private vehicles while on government time. It also encourages federal contractors and others doing business with the government to do the same. DOT will also adopt and enforce their own policies banning texting while on the job. DOT will also work with Congress, state and local government and other stakeholders to ensure this is addressed. Freight, innercity and commuter rail permanent restriction on cell phones and electronic devices in rail. Also to ban texting and cell phones by truck and bus drivers. Disqualify school bus drivers convicted of cell phone/text violations. Ask states to back up public campaigns with effective enforcement. This worked for seat belts and can also work for distracted driving. Driving while distracted should just feel wrong, as does driving while drunk or no seat belt feels wrong and is wrong. By this time next year, hopefully the mindset will have changed. It is socially irresponsible, and unacceptable. Laws alone are not enough. Common sense, common courtesy and the highest level of responsibility must be the mainstay. Secretary LaHood feels that this is probably the most important meeting ever held by the DOT. This is the beginning, not the end. It is the beginning that will help us save lives and prevent injuries.

(LMW note: Sorry, my spell check is still not spell checking. Please excuse the inaccuracies. Also, forgive my lack of proper formatting. Just too much to do with too little time to get it out in, Hope you will be able to follow adequately. My comments, although I attempted to keep them to the bare minimum appear in italics. There is a good probability I may have butchered up the names in the Question/Discussion sections. In the same sections, I didn't not all of them if the information appeared to be redundant. If I have screwed up anywhere, my sincere apologies. I hope somehow this is helpful. With a little bit of the stars lining up right, we should have an article/reprint out on this within a few days. All comments/suggestions be they positive or negative are most welcome.)

-Lynn M. Wesley
02 October 2009