Remarks prepared for:

David Strickland
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

"Click It or Ticket"
National Launch Press Event
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Washington, D.C.

<u>**Administrator Strickland**</u>**:**

Good afternoon everyone, and welcome. I'm David

Strickland, Administrator of the National Highway

Traffic Safety Administration. Thank you very much

for joining us this afternoon for the launch of our

2012 "Click It or Ticket" national campaign.

Thanks to decades of work by DOT, NHTSA, and our safety partners in the states, seat belt laws are practically universal across the country.

With laws in place in a majority of states, it has increasingly become standard practice for people to buckle up each time they get behind the wheel— and we've seen a decline in unbelted deaths in crashes.

With Click It or Ticket, we are continuing our important work to keep both drivers and passengers safe. During our 2012 effort, approximately 500,000 tickets will be issued for failure to wear seat belts.

This afternoon we're joining forces with state and local officials and law enforcement officers all over the country to spread the word about seat belts. Click It or Ticket is a major undertaking. It takes a lot of planning and leadership to make it successful. Every year we can count on the full support of U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. Secretary LaHood always brings strong leadership and commitment to NHTSA's safety initiatives, and I am extremely grateful for his support.

Please welcome Secretary LaHood:

Secretary LaHood:

- Thank you, Administrator Strickland. It's wonderful to be here.

- **At the Department of Transportation, safety is our number one priority.**

- **And "Click It or Ticket" is one of the best ways we make America safer.**

- **As David mentioned, we've seen remarkable success from coast to coast as a result of this annual effort.**

- **"Click It or Ticket" is a proven formula that encourages safe driving behavior—It combines strong laws and effective law enforcement with a robust public education campaign.**

- **The numbers really speak for themselves. Seat belts saved over 69,000 lives from 2006 to 2010.**

- **That's a great result, but we can do better.**

- **This year we released new nationwide ads called "Fakeroonies," which highlight some of the ways drivers pretend to be buckling up.**

- **These ads coincide with a crackdown by our law enforcement partners all around the country.**

- **They are on the air now, and I hope you take a moment to view them on the screens set up in the back of the plaza.**

- **Of course, we can't save lives without the wonderful people you see behind me.**

- **More than 10,000 law enforcement personnel will be participating in this effort from May 17 through June 3.**

- **Please join me in giving our law enforcement a round of applause.**

- **I am very proud of the "Click It or Ticket" program and I look forward to seeing more drivers buckle up on the road. Thank you.**

Administrator Strickland:

Thank you, Secretary LaHood.

We've made a lot of advancements in U.S. highway safety in recent years. Safer vehicle designs and new technologies are saving lives, yet seat belts are still the most effective means of reducing fatalities and serious injuries when traffic crashes occur.

Most people know they should buckle up, but some still refuse to do so. We will continue our safety work on this issue because a lot of people are still putting themselves as risk.

The answer is simple: The first thing every driver or passenger should do when they get into a car is buckle up. There is no good reason not to—seat belts save lives and prevent injuries every day. But only if you buckle up!

Now we'll hear from our law enforcement representative, Colonel Robert M. Coupe.

Remarks of Colonel Robert M. Coupe:

Secretary LaHood and Administrator Strickland, thank you for your invitation to represent law enforcement professionals from across the country. We are always pleased to join and support our Federal partners to strengthen our collective efforts to ensure that motorists are buckling up.

As the Secretary and Administrator shared, too many drivers and passengers continue to ride in a vehicle without wearing a belt. Some go as far as to pretend to be buckled up in an effort to fool officers. Let me assure you, those tactics are not

going to work. I can tell you on behalf of my colleagues here today and in communities nationwide: We're onto the failed attempts of quickly maneuvering the belt to avoid being stopped, like the driver who desperately grabs the seatbelt with their right hand and quickly pulls it across their chest. Or the driver who simply loops the seatbelt around their left shoulder or buckles it behind their back.

In the end all of these efforts are no more than failed attempts and place you in greater life threatening risks than receiving a ticket.

As we begin this campaign, troopers, police officers and deputy sheriffs throughout the country will be aggressively enforcing seat belt laws at all hours.

Please listen to our warning, buckle up, day and night.

Thank you.

Administrator Strickland:

Thank you, Colonel Coupe. We will now hear Vice Chairman John Saunders of the Governor's Highway Safety Association.

Vice Chairman Saunders:

Thank you, Administrator Strickland. The primary goal of the Governor's Highway Safety Association is to promote traffic safety as a national priority.

We're proud to serve as a partner to DOT, NHTSA, and our remarkable law enforcement agencies around the country to encourage motorists to use their seat belts.

While the numbers on deaths and injuries are moving in the right direction, we know it will take all of us—working within our communities and engaging at the national level—to keep up that momentum.

As we continue our work together to save lives and reduce injuries on our roadways, we stand ready to help get the message out on seat belts and other critical safety issues.

<u>Administrator Strickland</u>:

Thank you, Vice Chairman Saunders. That concludes

our presentation.

We will be happy take your questions now.