

# Presidential Documents

**Title 3—****Proclamation 7155 of December 4, 1998****The President****National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month, 1998****By the President of the United States of America****A Proclamation**

For most Americans, driving an automobile has become a practical necessity. Whether in an urban, suburban, or rural setting, the daily routine of modern life requires that we have access to reliable and affordable transportation from our homes to our offices, schools, shopping, and elsewhere. But the right to drive a vehicle brings with it the responsibility to drive safely. A fundamental part of this responsibility is the need to stay free from alcohol and drugs when driving. Driving under the influence of alcohol or mind-altering drugs can turn an automobile into a lethal weapon.

The Department of Transportation released some encouraging data earlier this year regarding injuries and fatalities caused by drunk or drugged drivers. The number of Americans killed in alcohol-related crashes last year dropped to an all-time low, representing a decline of more than 30 percent since 1982. Drunk-driving deaths accounted for less than 40 percent of all traffic deaths, and alcohol-related fatalities among 15- to 20-year-olds dropped by 5 percent last year alone. We have achieved this progress because of stronger laws, tougher enforcement, and increased public awareness. These statistics also reflect the effectiveness of the legislation I fought for and signed into law 3 years ago to help ensure zero tolerance for underage drinking and driving.

But there is more we must do. Last year, more than 16,000 Americans lost their lives to impaired driving, and hundreds of thousands more were injured. Research shows that the risk of being involved in a fatal car crash is 11 times greater when drivers have a blood alcohol content (BAC) exceeding .08. By passing a tough national standard of impaired driving at .08 BAC—an important measure I continue to challenge the Congress to enact—we could save additional lives. At my direction, the Secretary of Transportation developed a plan to make .08 BAC the standard on Federal property, such as national parks and military bases, and included in his plan a strategy to raise public awareness of the risks associated with drinking and driving. Federal agencies currently are implementing the Secretary's recommendations.

In memory of the thousands who have lost their lives to drunk and drugged drivers, I ask all motorists to participate in "National Lights on for Life Day" on Friday, December 18, 1998, by driving with vehicle headlights illuminated. By doing so, we will call attention to this critical national problem and remind others on the road of the responsibility to drive free of the influence of drugs and alcohol.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 1998 as National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month. I urge all Americans who drive to take responsibility for themselves, their loved ones, guests, and passengers; to stop anyone under the influence of alcohol or mind-altering drugs from getting behind the wheel; and to help teach our young people safe and alcohol- and drug-free driving behavior.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of December, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

*William Clinton*

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