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**SAFETY GROUP LAUDS NTSB FOR ADDING MOTORCYCLE HELMET LAWS TO “MOST WANTED” LIST, URGES CONGRESS TO ENACT OVERDUE TRAFFIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS**  
*State Laws Governing Seat Belt Enforcement, Teen Licensing, Drunk Driving And Motorcycle Helmet Use on National Priority Safety Agenda*

Following today’s announcement by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) adding all rider motorcycle helmet laws to its 2010 Most Wanted List of Safety Improvements directed at states, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety calls on Congress to enact federal legislation that will result in all states adopting minimum standards for teen driving laws, primary enforcement seat belt use laws, all-rider motorcycle helmet use laws and ignition interlock laws for first time offenders.

“We commend NTSB for this important addition to their Most Wanted List which includes other basic lifesaving traffic safety laws that will protect every family in every state. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for all Americans ages 3 to 33 and cost our nation more than \$230 billion annually,” said Jackie Gillan, Vice President, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety. “We call on Congress to accelerate state adoption by passing legislation similar to past laws that resulted in every state enacting a Minimum 21 Drinking Age, tougher drunk driving laws like .08% BAC and zero tolerance BAC laws to combat underage drinking and driving. It is time that Congress passes the bi-partisan Safe Teen and Novice Driver Uniform Protection Act (STANDUP), H.R. 1895 and S. 3269, as well as compels every state to have a primary enforcement seat belt law, an all rider motorcycle helmet law and an ignition interlock law for first time offenders.”

Too many states lack essential highway safety laws that were enacted decades ago. The first primary enforcement seat belt law was passed in the 1980s and all rider motorcycle helmet laws in the 1960s. Last year, more state legislatures considered laws to repeal all-rider motorcycle helmet laws than to enact them.

“Nearly 34,000 Americans were killed in 2009 in motor vehicle crashes. We cannot allow state capitals to continue to dither and delay safety laws while the death and injury toll grows every year,” Gillan continued. “The economic and emotional cost to families is completely unacceptable especially when we have proven, cost-effective solutions.”

Today, nineteen states still need primary enforcement seat belt laws, even though more than half (53 percent) of passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2009 were not wearing a seat belt.

In 2009, 5,623 people were killed in crashes involving a teen driver. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for all teens yet states are slow to act despite decades of research showing the lifesaving results of strong teen driving laws. This year only eight states passed legislation to close dangerous gaps and improve their graduated driver license (GDL) program.

NTSB's recommendation for all states to enact all-rider motorcycle helmet laws is timely, particularly because 4,462 motorcyclists died in crashes in 2009. That is double the number of fatalities in 1998. Helmets saved the lives of 1,483 motorcyclists in 2009, and could have saved another 732 if all motorcyclists in crashes were wearing helmets. Thirty states still need an all-rider helmet law.

In 2009, 10,839 people were killed in alcohol-related crashes. States need to get tough on drunk drivers. Studies show that an average drunk driver has driven drunk 87 times before their first arrest. Every state needs to enact an ignition interlock law for first time offenders to keep drunks from getting behind the wheel of a car.

“On average, nearly 650 people die on our highways every week, which is equivalent to six major airplane crashes. When NTSB makes recommendations on aviation safety there is action and accountability. With the need for critical highway safety laws we have neither. It is time to change that with congressional leadership,” stated Jackie Gillan.

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