



VISION ZERO NETWORK

PRESS RELEASE: Sunday, November 21, 2021

Offering Powerful Visuals & Compelling Personal Stories RE: New Transportation Funding Bill & Local Investments

Families Take Action to Stem U.S. Safety Crisis Communities Press for Policies to Address Escalating, Preventable Traffic Fatalities

Nationwide — In light of record-high increases in preventable traffic deaths, people from across the U.S. are joining forces to demand changes to the nation's broken transportation system, which [ranks nearly last](#) amongst developed nations in terms of safety and is *the* leading cause of death of youth.

Sunday, November 21, 2021, dozens of communities – Bismarck to Cleveland to Nashville – will commemorate [World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims](#) with rallies, vigils, bike rides, and memorials to honor the more than 42,000 people killed in traffic crashes a year in the U.S. They are calling on all levels of government to recognize this public health crisis and to direct funding and policies to [proven safety strategies](#). (*List of communities, demands below.*)

Safety advocates are also leading unprecedented [outreach to federal leaders](#), holding meetings across the nation to advocate for the first national goal and plan for Zero Traffic Deaths. A bipartisan, bicameral [Congressional Resolution \(S. Res. 321, H. Res. 565\)](#), has gained more than 50 co-sponsors and is considered a promising step, along with potentially transformational safety commitments in the recently passed \$550 billion Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal.

“Every transportation dollar of the recently passed Infrastructure Bill should be prioritized for the safe mobility needs of people in this country,” says Leah Shahum, Director of the [Vision Zero Network](#), a national nonprofit supporting the goal of zero traffic deaths or severe injuries among all road users. “For too long, our nation's leaders have been talking a good game about safety but actually funding projects that falsely claim to be “congestion relief” or “improving capacity” while perpetuating a transportation system that, shamefully, is *the* leading cause of death of youth in this country. We can do better than this. We must do better than this.”

In the first half of 2021, **18.4% more people died** in road traffic crashes compared to 2020, according to the recent [U.S. Dept. of Transportation estimation](#). Last year, 42,060 people died on the U.S. roads, a 24% spike over the prior year in the rate of traffic deaths – the highest in 96 years – according to [National Safety Council \(NSC\) estimates](#).

Additionally, some communities are disproportionately at risk in traffic deaths in the U.S., including [youth, seniors, people walking and bicycling, low-income people, and people of color](#).

“It is inexcusable that we have the tools and know-how to keep people safe but our elected leaders are neglecting to do so,” says Amy Cohen, co-founder of [Families for Safe Streets](#), whose 12-year-old son Sammy was hit and killed in NYC. “We know that lowering speeds and re-designing streets and leveraging proven safety technologies *will* prevent serious crashes. What we are demanding now is political will to start prioritizing safety above speed.”

Communities across the U.S. are organizing events to urge changes at the local, state and national levels, including the following:

- Commitment to a national Zero Traffic Deaths goal, including the [Congressional Resolution](#) and a plan for Vision Zero from the U.S. DOT.
- Long-overdue flexibility from states to allow municipalities to use proven safety strategies, including lower speed limits and Complete Streets designs.
- Linking federal funding to explicit safety goals and outcomes, as well as VMT reduction.
- Prioritize *Safe Systems* strategies, such as improved designs of the built environment and speed management, reducing dependence on police-led traffic enforcement.
- Adopt federal vehicle safety regulations (modeled on international best practices), particularly those that protect vulnerable road users outside of the vehicle.
- Shifting funding and policies at local, state, and federal levels to prioritize safety over speed; encourage safe walking, biking and transit; and focus on locations and communities that are high-injury, and often, underserved areas.

The World Day of Remembrance is an [international event](#), started in 2005, honoring the **1.35 million** people killed and millions more injured on the world’s roads each year *and* organizing for change to prevent such tragedies.

In the U.S., World Day of Remembrance events will occur at various times on Sunday, November 21, 2021, including in the following locations:

Alameda, CA	Cleveland, OH	Nashville, TN	San Francisco, CA
Alexandria, VA	Denver, CO	New Haven, CT	St. Paul, MN
Arlington, VA	Eugene, OR	New York, NY	Tampa, FL
Bismarck, ND	Fairfax, VA	Newark, NJ	Texas
Boise, ID	Fairfield, CA	Orlando, FL	Toronto (Canada)
Boston, MA	Fresno, CA	Philadelphia, PA	Washington, DC
Boulder, CO	Indianapolis, IN	Pittsburgh, PA	Wheaton, MD
Charlotte, NC	Los Angeles, CA	Richmond, VA	Wichita, KC
Chicago, IL	Melbourne, FL	San Antonio, TX	Winston-Salem, NC

[Find details and links](#) to these local events and the national Virtual Candle Lighting. See a [summary](#) of 2020 World Day of Remembrance events.

For more information, including introductions to local organizers and victims and those who have lost loved ones in crashes, please contact: Leah Shahum, leah@visionzeronetwork.org or Amy Cohen, amy@familiesforsafestroads.org.

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