

The President's Radio Address *October 19, 1996*

Good morning. Today I want to talk to you about how we can demand responsibility from all our young people by taking firm steps to stop teens from driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

My vision is of an America where we offer opportunity to all, demand responsibility from all, and build a stronger community where everyone has a place. That's America's basic bargain. That's how we will keep our young people safe and give them the futures they deserve.

We've done a lot to expand opportunity for our young people: reducing the cost of college loans and improving the terms for repayment, expanding scholarships to college, creating millions of new jobs. We've preserved the summer jobs program and created AmeriCorps, which gives young people the opportunity to serve in their communities and earn money for college. I want to do more.

Our balanced budget plan can make 2 years of college after high school as universal as a high school diploma is today by giving people a deduction on their taxes, dollar for dollar, for the cost of the typical community college tuition. We offer a deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for any college tuition and permit families to save in an IRA and then withdraw from it, tax-free, to pay for education for their children.

But we must demand the responsibility of our young people as well. Our responsibility is to teach them right from wrong and then to expect them to act accordingly. So in our welfare reform efforts, we've required teen mothers to live at home and stay in school or lose their welfare benefits. We went to court to support those communities that have decided to require drug testing for high school athletes. We've imposed a zero tolerance policy for guns in schools. We're taking on teen smoking and trying to stop tobacco companies from advertising and marketing cigarettes to our young people. We've encouraged communities to enforce their truancy laws and to adopt new programs like school uniform policies and to impose community curfews. We supported character education programs and drug-free school programs for children in our schools all across America. These are all ways for parents and teachers and law

enforcement people to set rules, maintain order and discipline, and make schools places of learning, not violence and destruction.

Today we're taking another step. Too many teens pose a threat to themselves and others by drinking and driving. Just last year, 2,200 young people between the ages of 15 and 20 died in alcohol-related car crashes. Thanks especially to the leadership of groups like Mothers Against Drunk Driving and Students Against Drunk Driving, America has made real progress in reducing teen drunk driving over the last decade.

But there's more to do. We have pushed for a policy of zero tolerance for teen drinking and driving. If you're under 21 and you drink, you can't drive, period. Last year, when fewer than half the States had zero tolerance laws, I called on Congress to enact legislation making it the law of the land. Congress acted. Since then, 13 more States have adopted these strict rules.

Now we're taking final action to demand responsibility from teens in all 50 States. Today I am pleased to announce that we're issuing a new rule. Every State must pass a law making it illegal for anyone under 21 to drive with alcohol in their blood. If they're caught, their driver's licenses must be suspended. Under the new law passed by Congress, States that do not put this into effect will lose some of their Federal highway funds.

Now we should take the next step to increase responsibility among teenagers. Drug use is down all across America, but unfortunately, it is still rising among young people. That's why I have fought to expand the safe and drug-free schools program, to get more people out there, like D.A.R.E. officers, telling our children that drugs are wrong and drugs can kill you. That's why we're requiring parolees to pass a drug test or go back to jail. If they want to stay out of jail, they must stay off drugs.

I believe we should use the privilege of a driver's license to demand responsible behavior by young people when it comes to drugs, too. We're already saying to teens, if you drink, you aren't allowed to drive. Now we should say that teens should pass a drug test as a condition

of getting a driver's license. Our message should be simple: no drugs or no driver's license.

Today I am directing General Barry McCaffrey, the Director of our drug office, and Secretary Federico Pena, the Secretary of Transportation, to report back to me within 90 days with a plan for how to do this, including legislation if appropriate, and other ways to fight the problem of teen drug use and driving.

Let me make one thing clear: Even though teen drug use is up, all the evidence is that 90 percent of our children are drug-free. They are doing the right thing. They are not experimenting. So we're asking them, the 90 percent who are drug-free, to be responsible enough

to participate in this drug-testing program to help us identify the 10 percent who are on the brink of getting in trouble and get them away from drugs before it's too late.

Our goal must be to help parents pass on their values to their children, to help their children to act responsibly, to take charge of their lives and their futures. If we offer our children more opportunity and demand of them more responsibility, America's best days are ahead.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:52 p.m. on October 18 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 19.

Memorandum on Reducing Teenage Driving Under the Influence of Illicit Drugs

October 19, 1996

Memorandum for the Director of National Drug Control Policy, the Secretary of Transportation

Subject: Reducing Teenage Driving Under the Influence of Illicit Drugs

Over the last 4 years, we have worked hard to keep drugs off our streets and out of the hands of our children. Indeed, the number one goal of the 1996 *National Drug Control Strategy* is to motivate America's youth to reject illegal drugs and substance abuse. All Americans must accept responsibility for teaching our young people that drugs are illegal and confronting them with the consequences of using drugs. My Administration has elevated the Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy to the Cabinet, supported drug testing of high school athletes before the United States Supreme Court, and defended the Safe and Drug Free Schools Program from congressional attempts to reduce its funding.

Despite the progress we are making in reducing overall drug use in this country, we continue to see increasing trends in drug use among teens that began in the early 1990's. We, therefore, must still do more to confront this deadly problem.

One of the critical areas where drugs threaten the health and safety of young people is on the roads. I have taken a tough stand against

drinking and driving by young people—calling for and then signing into law a tough new “zero tolerance” policy that requires States to have laws allowing judges to take away the driver's licenses of young people who drive with any alcohol in their system.

It is equally important that we be tough on those young people who drive under the influence of drugs. Every driver has the responsibility to drive safely and not injure themselves or others. The driver's license is a privilege that should not be available to those who fail to demonstrate responsible behavior. Denial of driving privileges to those who engage in illegal drug use can be a powerful incentive to stay away from and off drugs, particularly for teenagers. I believe we should consider drug-testing all minors applying for driver's licenses and requiring them to be found drug-free before they can obtain driver's licenses. Young people must understand that drug use cannot and will not be tolerated. Making licenses conditional on the driver being drug-free may prove to be an important and effective way to send that message.

State and Federal laws recognize the relation between drugs and driving. It is illegal in every State to drive under the influence of drugs that impair driving performance. Seven States have enacted “zero tolerance” laws for drugs, which make it illegal to drive with any amount of an