



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

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THE DRINKING DRIVER CAUSES HIGHWAY ACCIDENTS

Statement by Senator Bob Dole

"Alcohol is the most widely used drug in America today," states the second report of the National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse issued on March 22. In 1971, Americans consumed almost four and one-half billion gallons of beer, wine and distilled spirits; a record high for American alcohol consumption.

Law enforcement officials have long recognized that the drunk driver is one of the worst menaces on the highway. Until recently there were surprisingly few statistics to back them up. In 1968, after an exhaustive study, the U.S. Department of Transportation reported their findings on alcohol related accidents to the Congress. The report revealed the appalling fact that more than one-half of all fatal highway accidents and nearly one-half of all injury accidents involve drivers who have been drinking excessively. For example, in 1970, 35,000 Americans were killed in accidents where drinking was involved; an average of 673 deaths per week. In addition, an estimated 500,000 disabling injuries resulted from alcohol related accidents. The report also stated that 80 per cent of the drivers in drunk driver related fatalities were identifiable as alcoholics before the fatal crashes.

INFORMATION NEEDED

Personal involvement can assure that the right action is taken to control the alcoholic driver and the broader problem of drunken driving. For that involvement to be meaning-

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ful, it must be informed, and so it is hoped that the information cited in this article will be helpful to you.

COOPERATION REQUIRED

Solving the problem of the drunk driver will ultimately require close cooperation between individual interested citizens and many of the government, medical, and social agencies. Each of us can do his part by urging them to cooperate fully with and support the motor vehicle administration, police, and courts as they make full use of the existing legal tools to reduce the number of traffic injuries and fatalities on our highways.

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