THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS’ ASSOCIATION
SUPPORTS SHERIFFS AND DEPUTIES ENFORCING TRAFFIC LAWS AND
IMPLEMENTING TRAFFIC SAFETY PROGRAMS TO SAVE LIVES AND REDUCE
CRIME

WHEREAS, highway and public safety is adversely impacted by drivers operating motor
vehicles on the nation’s roadways in an unsafe manner; and

WHEREAS, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates 42,915
people died in motor vehicle crashes in 2021, a 10.5% increase from 2020; and

WHEREAS, according to the NHTSA, every day about 32 people in the United States die in
drunk-driving crashes - that's one person every 45 minutes. In 2020, 11,654 people died in
alcohol-impaired driving traffic deaths a 14% increase from 2019, and in 2021 they increased
by another 5% to be involved in 19% of all crashes, and these deaths were all preventable;
and

WHEREAS, according to a five-state study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety
(IIHS), after recreational marijuana was legalized, the rate of car crashes with injuries
increased by nearly 6%, while fatal crashes rose by 4%. No increase was seen in states that
hadn't legalized marijuana; and

WHEREAS, the presence of law enforcement patrol vehicles on roadways captures the
attention of the motoring public and has a calming effect on driving behavior; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement officers conducting traffic enforcement and making traffic stops
give the motoring public the impression that drivers who break the law may be stopped and
face a penalty; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement officers conducting traffic enforcement and making traffic stops
often result in the detection and removal of impaired drivers and saving lives lost to impaired
driving crashes; and

WHEREAS, witnessing active traffic enforcement efforts by the motoring public may impact
driving decisions and driving behaviors today and in the future that may ultimately alter the
course of driving actions by the motoring public, which may result in safer operation of motor
vehicles on the highway ultimately reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities; and

WHEREAS, it is important to consider the extent to which traffic enforcement and traffic
safety impact the overall safety of communities. In the United States in 2021, 42,915 people were killed in traffic crashes compared with 22,900 people who were victims of homicide. The number of victims in both of these categories is far too high, but the number of crash victims is almost double the number of homicide victims. In many communities, the odds of being killed or injured in a crash are far higher than suffering a similar outcome from a violent crime; and

WHEREAS, some jurisdictions have removed traffic enforcement responsibilities and duties from law enforcement agencies; and

WHEREAS, ensuring equity in enforcement is an on-going concern with law enforcement and citizens and some law enforcement agencies have implemented statistical review of driver characteristics to ensure fair and balanced enforcement activities; and

WHEREAS, some governing bodies have passed or are contemplating bills to prohibit the enforcement of traffic laws including some collision-causing moving violations; and

WHEREAS, multipronged strategies to reducing traffic crashes and fatalities include the element of proactive traffic enforcement efforts by law enforcement;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Traffic Safety Committee of the National Sheriffs’ Association (NSA) strongly supports law enforcement efforts to reduce traffic crashes and fatalities by engaging in proactive traffic enforcement activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NSA supports fair and balanced approaches to addressing racial disparity within traffic enforcement without compromising public safety; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NSA supports traffic enforcement functions, responsibilities and duties remaining with, being a part of, and being solely the responsibility of law enforcement agencies and officers; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NSA supports all sheriff’s offices using the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators’ (AAMVA) document titled, What to Do and Expect When Stopped by Law Enforcement, in their community outreach activities as a tool for gaining public trust; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NSA supports the implementation and operation of a traffic safety and enforcement mission within every law enforcement agency and encourages the use of the NSA publication Traffic Safety Program Implementation – A Step-By-Step Guide for Law Enforcement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the NSA encourages all sheriff’s offices to collaborate with their elected officials to ensure meaningful legislation that supports equity without reducing law enforcement’s ability to enforce violations impacting traffic safety; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the National Sheriffs’ Association supports all sheriff’s offices taking necessary steps to actively encourage deputies to engage in on-going, proactive traffic enforcement efforts to save lives needlessly lost in traffic crashes.
ties
2 https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving
3 https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813298
6 Philadelphia to become first major US city to ban police from stopping drivers for low-level traffic violations - CNN
7 Michigan State Police's new website releases traffic stop data (freep.com)