



**2023-01**

**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;<sup>i</sup> 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<sup>ii</sup> a 14% increase from 2019, and in 2021 they increased by another 5% to be involved in 19% of all crashes,<sup>iii</sup> and these deaths were all preventable; and

**WHEREAS**, according to a five-state study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS),<sup>iv</sup> 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.<sup>v</sup> 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;<sup>vi</sup> 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;<sup>vii</sup> 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*,<sup>viii</sup> 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*;<sup>ix</sup> 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.



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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/early-estimate-2021-traffic-fatalities>

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/drunk-driving>

<sup>iii</sup> <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813298>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.iihs.org/news/detail/crash-rates-jump-in-wake-of-marijuana-legalization-new-studies-show>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/news/press-releases/fbi-releases-2021-crime-in-the-nation-statistics>

<sup>vi</sup> [Philadelphia to become first major US city to ban police from stopping drivers for low-level traffic violations - CNN](#)

<sup>vii</sup> [Michigan State Police's new website releases traffic stop data \(freep.com\)](#)

<sup>viii</sup> <https://www.aamva.org/law-enforcement/what-to-do-when-stopped-by-law-enforcement>

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.sheriffs.org/sites/default/files/Traffic%20Safety%20Program%20Implementation.pdf>