

TESTIMONY OF
THE HONORABLE RODNEY E. SLATER
SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES SENATE
APRIL 24, 1997

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Committee today to describe the safety related provisions of our surface transportation reauthorization proposal, the National Economic Crossroads Transportation Act of 1997 (NEXTEA), as well as the additional safety provisions we submitted on April 17 in a separate proposal entitled the "Surface Transportation Safety Act of 1997."

As I have said on numerous occasions since the Senate honored me with confirmation, the safety and security of all of our nation's transportation systems will be my highest priority -- a moral commitment as well as a policy imperative. Nothing is more important to me, to the American people, and, of course, to you, Mr. Chairman, and this Committee. The safety of the American people is our number one goal -- the true "North Star" that guides us and by which we will be judged. Our transportation system cannot only be about moving people and goods efficiently. Even as we increase mobility and accommodate new travel demand, we must also enable people to travel more safely.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) was a landmark piece of legislation that contained a vision for safe travel in America -- a vision that we in the Department, along with all our partners, have worked hard to implement. Since 1991, motor vehicle fatal crash rates have dropped 10 percent, continuing a 15-year long trend that has seen this rate drop more than 50 percent. Fatal crashes involving large trucks--those registered over 10,000 pounds--have dropped almost 30 percent, and fatal crashes per vehicle-mile traveled have declined almost 36 percent. Railroad grade crossing deaths have dropped 7 percent.

Despite this positive history, I believe we are at a crossroads in our efforts to make transportation safe for all Americans. We have made great strides but we will need to redouble our efforts if we are to continue to make progress.

For our part, we took the first step towards ensuring the safety of our transportation system in the 21st century when, on March 12, I joined President Clinton and Vice President Gore in announcing our NEXTEA proposal. NEXTEA includes a range of strategies and funding for improving highway and transit safety. Then, last week, we took the next step when we proposed the Surface Transportation Safety Act of 1997, which expands the scope of our proposals to include additional traffic safety initiatives -- particularly an aggressive strategy to increase safety belt use -- and provisions on rail and mass transit antiterrorism, commuter rail, hazardous materials safety, pipeline safety, and safe food transportation. We intend that this proposed Safety Act be considered as an addition to our NEXTEA proposal.

It is essential that we act on these proposals. Today we face a number of challenges in our efforts to improve safety. Factors such as growing travel demand, which reflects a strong economy, have caused improvements in highway safety to level off. Growth in the freight sector brings increased movements of hazardous materials. Construction excavations can damage buried pipelines, utilities, and communications systems, threatening public safety and the environment. Railroad and mass transit facilities have become tempting targets for terrorists and vandals.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

The primary focus of our safety proposal is on traffic safety. This is appropriate because highway related deaths account for 94 percent of all transportation-related fatalities. Last year nearly 42,000 Americans died and over 3.4 million were injured on our roads. Highway crashes are the leading cause of death for children, teenagers, and young adults. In addition to the tragic toll on our families, crashes cost our economy \$150.5 billion annually, including \$17 billion in medical costs.

By taking steps that can reduce the terrible toll of motor vehicle crashes, we can make a substantial difference in the cost of health care in the nation. The best strategy for accomplishing this rests in the hands of each and every one of us.

In his weekly radio address last December 28, President Clinton said, *If there is one thing we can do to save thousands of American lives, it is to increase seat belt use nationwide.* All of us must realize that highway safety is a shared responsibility -- a problem that can only be solved through the concerted efforts of all Americans.

We have made significant progress. Since 1984, we have increased seat belt use rates from 14 percent to the current rate of 68 percent. A large part of the progress we have made to date is the result of 49 states having enacted laws requiring seat belt use -- many of them in response to the strong incentives the Congress created in ISTEA. However, despite this good news, today nearly one-third of Americans still do not buckle up and 80 percent of child safety seats are not used properly. Every day, an unrestrained child under the age of 5 is killed in a traffic crash.

Equally disturbing is the fact that in recent years, increases in seat belt use have leveled off. Other industrialized countries have usage rates of 90 percent and higher. We can and must do better if we are to decrease highway fatalities and injuries.

Our message is simple-- seat belts and child safety seats work! A person is twice as likely to die or sustain a serious injury in a crash if unbelted. Child safety seats are even more effective in protecting small children: when used properly, they can reduce fatalities and serious injuries by 70 percent.

Today, seat belts save 9,500 lives annually. We can do better, however, and so on April 16 the President set a new national goal of achieving an 85 percent use rate by 2000 and a 90 percent rate by 2005. The President also set an additional goal of reducing child fatalities in motor vehicle crashes by 15 percent by 2000 and 25 percent by 2005. These goals translate into many lives saved and injuries prevented. Reaching the 85 percent belt use goal would prevent an additional 4,200 deaths and more than 102,000 injuries annually. Achieving the 90 percent goal would prevent more than 5,500 additional deaths and more than 132,000 injuries annually. Reducing child fatalities 15 percent would save the lives of 102 children annually, while reducing fatalities 25 percent would save 171 children each year.

To help our state partners reach these goals, we have included in our NEXTEA proposal \$124 million in financial incentives for state programs to increase seat belt use. In addition, NEXTEA also includes over \$1 billion in flexible highway safety funds that the states may use for practically any safety enforcement or education program they develop. This is a 25% increase over ISTEA and provides added flexibility for states not available to them under ISTEA.

One strategy that would receive support under this proposal is "primary" seat belt laws, which allow police to ticket motorists solely for failure to use a seat belt. The experience of the 11 states that already have primary seat belt use laws has shown that these laws are one of the most effective strategies for increasing seat belt use. In these states, primary enforcement laws have been shown, on average, to increase seat belt usage by 15 percentage points. This increase in safety belt use translates into a 5.9 percent decline in fatalities in states that authorize primary enforcement of the law.

In California and Louisiana, states that recently upgraded their laws to allow for primary enforcement, safety belt use increased by 13 and 18 percentage points, respectively. It is also noteworthy that eight of the top nine states in terms of belt usage are "primary" law states, including Texas, Hawaii, Louisiana, and Oregon.

North Carolina's experience is an excellent example of the effectiveness of primary seat belt laws. In 1993, Governor Jim Hunt, using the state's "primary" enforcement authority, launched North Carolina's "Click it or Ticket" program to increase seat belt and child safety seat use. In just three years, seat belt use climbed from 65 percent to 82 percent. This resulted in a 12 percent decline in fatalities and serious injuries, which -- in addition to the obvious benefits in human terms -- saved North Carolina taxpayers \$164 million in health care costs and \$33 million in auto insurance fees. It is also worth noting that the \$25 fines assessed for not wearing a seat belt -- totaling \$2.4 million -- have been directed to North Carolina's schools to educate the state's children on, among other things, the importance of wearing belts.

Many states will be able to achieve our 85 percent goal by 2000, within the framework of existing law. The State of Washington is a good example. Despite not having a primary belt law, their current belt use rate is 84 % and continues to rise due to a consistent policy of enforcing the belt use law they have. Last weekend, I had a very productive meeting with New

Hampshire officials about how that state can make substantial progress in increasing seat belt use.

However, if belt use rates do not improve in states without primary belt laws, we cannot stand by while public safety is jeopardized. Therefore, we are also proposing that in fiscal year 2003, if a state has not achieved a statewide safety belt use rate of 85 percent or higher, or enacted a primary enforcement safety belt use law -- the proven strategy for increasing seat belt use -- then funding apportioned to the state for highway construction would be transferred to the state's occupant protection program fund. In the first year, 1½ percent of highway construction funds would be transferred. If a state remained in noncompliance in subsequent years, the figure would rise to three percent. This transfer provision is targeted, and we believe, will be effective. Let me emphasize states won't lose any money. They'll just be required to spend more money on safety programs. This strategy mirrors the successful provision in ISTEA which encouraged states to adopt minimum seat belt use laws.

These legislative proposals are part of a broader coordinated national strategy to increase seat belt use that the President announced on April 16. At that time, the President also announced he was issuing an Executive Order on the use of seat belts by Federal employees and on Federal lands. The E.O. strengthens existing requirements by directing all federal employees to use seat belts while on the job; orders the Department of Defense (DoD) and the National Park Service to institute programs and policies to increase seat belt use on DoD installations and in national parks; encourages Tribal Governments to adopt programs and policies for highways on Tribal lands; and encourages federal contractors and grantees to institute on-the-job seat belt use policies and programs for their employees.

These initiatives build on the Administration's ongoing efforts to increase auto safety. Last February, President Clinton announced a proposed rule for a universal child safety seat attachment system, that will make child safety seats much easier to install in motor vehicles. It will eliminate incompatibility problems and save lives by making child seats more secure and easier to use. In addition, the Administration has taken a number of steps to improve the safety of air bag-equipped cars. The Administration has conducted stepped up educational efforts in cooperation with its many partners, especially the privately funded Air Bag Safety Campaign. In addition, auto manufacturers have sent printed warning labels to air bag car owners to be sure they know the essentials of air bag car safety.

I want to underscore to the Committee that, for us to achieve the goal of increased seat belt use, we can not rely solely on federal programs or the federal government. Our success depends on the efforts of all our key partners. Joining me at the White House on April 16 in support of the goals we have set were a cross section of key players in the seat belt effort -- including representatives of state law enforcement, the auto companies, the medical profession, people whose lives have been saved by seat belts and a bipartisan group including former Secretaries of Transportation Boyd, Coleman, Skinner, Card and Peña.

States need to support seat belt and child safety outreach programs and active enforcement of strong seat belt and child safety seat laws. **Individual communities** must emphasize and enforce strong traffic laws. **National organizations**, such as the National Governor's Association and the American College of Emergency Physicians, must work to educate their constituencies on the importance of correct, full-time seat belt and child safety seat use. **Businesses** need to support seat belt and child safety seat legislation, enforcement, and education, because saving lives is good business. And finally and most importantly, **private citizens** must buckle up every time and on every trip, and properly secure every child in a vehicle in a child safety seat or seat belt -- in the back seat, the safest place for children.

These actions can increase proper seat belt and child safety seat use, saving lives and preventing injuries. The President and I encourage every American to participate in this effort by making sure every vehicle occupant is properly secured on every trip.

Other portions of our proposed NEXTEA legislation provide funding for revised or new grants to further improve highway safety. The Section 402 state formula grant program -- which we propose to increase by 14% to over \$1 billion over six years -- will continue to fund a range of strategies tailored by each state to meet its own safety needs. And we are redoubling our efforts to reduce drunk driving -- still a major scourge on our roadways.

NEXTEA proposes to increase funding dedicated to support states' efforts to attack alcohol-impaired driving by 74% over six years. Under this program, grants are made available to support a broad range of anti-drunk driving programs.

Drunk driving prevention is being greatly assisted by the enactment of zero tolerance legislation. A "zero tolerance" law makes it illegal for a person under 21 to drive a motor vehicle with any measurable blood-alcohol content. In June 1995, President Clinton urged that zero tolerance become the law of the land. On that date, 24 states and the District of Columbia had zero tolerance laws in effect. The provision was subsequently included in the National Highway System (NHS) Act. Since June 1995, 13 states have enacted zero tolerance laws. Thirteen states and Puerto Rico have not yet enacted zero tolerance laws. These laws are very effective, reducing alcohol-related crashes involving teenage drivers by as much as 10-20 percent.

One significant drunk-driving countermeasure is our incentive provision in NEXTEA to make 0.08 Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) the standard for impairment. Research indicates that at 0.08 BAC, drivers are impaired in virtually all critical tasks - steering, braking, and judgement. Studies show 0.08 BAC laws are effective in reducing drunk driving and we commend Members of Congress who are examining legislative strategies to encourage these laws.

Another major innovation we suggest is to make the anti-drunk driving program more results-oriented, by rewarding those states that achieve progress in bringing down drunk driving, whatever tactics they use.

Finally, NEXTEA also proposes a new incentive grant program to help States improve countermeasures against drugged driving. Our proposal would make \$25.1 million available over the life of NEXTEA, to be supplemented by \$10 million from the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, for drug testing demonstration programs, state grants, and prevention, education, and enforcement programs.

Another new incentive grant program in NEXTEA would provide States up to \$48 million to improve their highway safety data and traffic records systems, enabling them to better target their resources to those areas and issues needing the most attention in their state.

Finally, recent surveys indicate disturbing increases in aggressive driving behavior. We will continue to work with our partners to leverage Section 402 and other federally-funded enforcement and education programs to address this emerging problem.

This comprehensive package of proposals to address seat belt use, drunk and drugged driving, and other major auto safety challenges can substantially reduce highway fatalities below current levels. We look forward to working with Congress to assure their implementation.

MOTOR CARRIER SAFETY

Ensuring safe motor carrier transportation is an important part of our overall efforts to improve highway safety. Healthy economic growth and logistical innovations like just-in-time delivery have spurred significant increases in truck travel and been a boon for the trucking industry. However, for the sake of all Americans -- for the general motoring public as well as truck drivers -- it is essential that we continually focus on enhancing truck safety.

Fortunately, there is a strong foundation -- much of it created by this Committee -- on which to build. This Committee can take credit for its major role in creating the Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) program in the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982 and helping to shape its progress in succeeding years. All States now participate in MCSAP and have adopted and enforce uniform minimum safety standards for interstate commercial vehicles. Working together under this program, the FHWA and the States have developed uniform inspection procedures, data exchange, and training. Each year, over 8,000 State enforcement officers conduct almost 2 million uniform roadside commercial driver and vehicle inspections and traffic enforcement stops, as well as almost 9,000 on-site safety reviews of trucking companies. The FHWA collects, analyzes, and shares safety and enforcement data with all States to target unsafe carriers for enforcement.

As a result of this partnership, great strides have been made in the overall safety of motor carriers. From 1988 to 1995, truck safety improved substantially, outpacing even the substantial increases made in overall highway safety. For that period, truck fatalities declined by 14 percent, and fatality rates declined by 30 percent. Despite growth in traffic, the number of large truck crash fatalities decreased almost 5 percent, from 5,144 in 1994 to 4,903 in 1995. Despite

these gains, the current level of truck-related fatalities is still unacceptable, and there is concern that our safety gains may be leveling off.

To improve the crash rate dramatically, Federal motor carrier safety programs must be more focused and strategic, and channel resources to strategies that give us the highest payoff in reducing crashes. In line with Vice President Gore's reinvention initiatives, improvements in motor carrier safety demand that we restructure and re-engineer our programs to focus on results. Thus, we propose in NEXTEA to emphasize results, rather than the number of activities performed, to strengthen our fundamental enforcement safety programs, which include roadside inspections, carrier reviews, enforcement, education, and outreach. Under this performance-based approach, we will ask the States to identify their most significant safety problems and create incentives for them to address these problems. We will help States develop their own unique benchmarks for evaluating their programs and measuring their success.

Oregon provides a good example of how performance-based strategies can work. From 1993 to 1995, fatigue-related crashes doubled for Oregon-based carriers and nearly tripled for out-of-state carriers. In response, Oregon has established a goal of reducing fatigue-related commercial crashes by 10 percent in 1997 through several strategies.

Initially, they will identify carriers whose drivers show a high rate of involvement in fatigue-related crashes and conduct safety compliance reviews of these carriers. They will also target increased inspections and enforcement of hours-of-service requirements on those highways where fatigue has proven to be a primary cause of accidents. Other States will be informed about carriers based in their states that are involved in fatigue-related accidents in Oregon. In addition, Oregon has established regular monitoring procedures and benchmarks to measure the State's progress toward meeting its goal.

In our reauthorization proposal, the Department is seeking \$100 million annually for the National Motor Carrier Safety Program. This \$100 million would be used to fund two main components of the program. Motor Carrier Safety Assistance Program (MCSAP) grants to states would be funded at \$83 million, and a program would be created to fund information systems, analysis, and driver program activities at \$17 million.

MCSAP would include funding for basic enforcement and performance incentive grants, as well as high priority activities, such as border enforcement and other projects that benefit all States. Our goal is for all States to implement the performance-based approach in 6 years.

We cannot identify our most significant safety problems and measure our progress without improving our information systems and analysis. In the past, fiscal support for these activities has been pieced together from a variety of sources, but the Department is now seeking a separate, dedicated source of funding at \$17 million. The funds would be flexible and available for grants or cooperative agreements with the states or others or for in-house improvements to information systems and analysis. This category of funds would also support Commercial

Vehicle Information System (CVIS) implementation on a national basis and driver improvement programs.

An important aspect of truck safety relates to the size and weight of trucks. In 1994, as Federal Highway Administrator, I made the commitment to undertake a comprehensive truck size and weight (TS&W) study. Since the last such study a number of decades ago, factors ranging from deregulation to global competition to technological advances have changed the way that transportation markets work. Since the last study, we have learned more about vehicle dynamics and truck safety. It was clearly time for a comprehensive re-examination of issues related to truck size and weight.

The study is focusing on a wide range of complex and interrelated issues. Safety is a principal concern, and in this regard we are mindful of serious legislative proposals to restore uniformity to size and weight policy and address truck safety on the NHS. We hope that the results of the study now underway will assist in consideration of this important issue.

The study is proceeding forward on an expedited completion schedule. By early summer, the Department will have completed its initial evaluation of alternative TS&W scenarios. This will include, for example, the impact of a change to the Federal maximum gross vehicle weight limit on infrastructure performance, safety, environmental quality, and traffic operations, as well as the competitive position of the modes.

Based on conclusions drawn from the analysis of alternative scenarios, our goal is to provide Congress and other decision makers with tools to evaluate the issues surrounding TS&W. The study will provide useful information about the relationship between vehicle configuration and an array of critical considerations including, most importantly, safety.

MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY

NEXTEA and the Surface Transportation Safety Act proposal contain additional initiatives to improve motor vehicle safety. At the top of the list is a 15 percent funding increase for vehicle testing and research to strengthen our crash testing and recall investigation programs. We are also proposing to close a loophole in our motor vehicle equipment defects recall authority by prohibiting all retailers, not just auto dealers, from selling items of motor vehicle equipment, such as child safety seats, that have been judged to be defective and been recalled.

Another provision would enhance the Department's and the motor vehicle manufacturing industry's ability to conduct real-world field testing of design innovations that will increase safety, by increasing the number of motor vehicles that could be temporarily exempted from specific current motor vehicle standards. As part of our regulatory reform efforts under the National Performance Review, we have concluded that the current 2,500 vehicle limit actually discourages manufacturers from testing possible safety technologies and is too small to permit effective evaluation. If granted this authority, we will, of course, exercise it with great diligence

to safety concerns and only after public notice has been given and the public has had an opportunity to comment.

We are also proposing to clarify the scope of our international motor vehicle safety harmonization efforts. This clarification will support DOT's participation in international harmonization activities with the goal of improving motor vehicle safety here and abroad, making safety the highest common denominator. As our proposal states, these efforts will be consistent with our motor vehicle safety statute and will not result in any lessening of U.S. safety performance standards. Our efforts will always be directed at the enactment of motor vehicle safety, in keeping with our mission and responsibility in this regard. Any proposed regulatory changes resulting from these activities would have to be consistent with our existing safety statutes and would be fully and publicly considered.

Under many state vehicle registration and titling systems, it is possible to create a virtually "new" car from broken parts salvaged from wrecks in the junkyard without that vehicle ever being subjected to a safety inspection. To address this concern, we have also proposed provisions to achieve uniformity in state laws regulating the titling of severely damaged passenger motor vehicles. The new requirements, which are voluntary, would serve as guidelines to help states track these vehicles and ensure that they meet safety and anti-theft standards.

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY

The Administration's NEXTEA proposal recognizes the fact that the **condition and** design of the physical roadway plays an important role in many crashes. A **disproportionate share** of fatal crashes occur in rural areas (areas of less than 50,000 population), **where roadway design features and emergency response times are often less than optimal. Data on two-lane roads indicate that they have a fatal crash rate significantly above the system average. Many two-lane roads were constructed before current safety guidelines were developed and carry traffic volumes well beyond those originally anticipated.**

The FHWA is working with the American Association of **State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)** and the Transportation Research Board to develop a comprehensive strategic plan, **especially a roadway safety plan, to improve highway safety.**

Under ISTEA, we have done a great deal to improve the safety of our physical roadways, using dedicated safety funds to pay for improvements, such as lane shoulder widening, grooved pavements and railroad **grade crossing upgrades. Since the enactment of ISTEA, grade crossing deaths have dropped by 7%, but there is much work to be done.**

In addition, our NEXTEA proposal **contains a variety of programs to improve roadway safety. To begin with, our proposal to increase core NEXTEA highway construction programs by 30 percent will provide funding to upgrade physical roadways to improve safety. Through the**

successful Scenic Byway program, we are demonstrating that scenic beauty and safety can go hand-in-hand.

The current 10% Surface Transportation Program (STP) safety set-aside would be replaced under our legislation by a directly funded Flexible Highway Infrastructure Safety Program -- which is 25 percent larger than under ISTEA -- which can be used to improve safety on any non-interstate road or facility -- the greatest flexibility of any federal highway construction program.

Separate funding allocations for railroad highway grade crossings and hazard elimination activities would be retained, but NEXTEA would provide states with additional flexibility well beyond the current program, provided they develop an integrated, results-oriented planning process. This would allow states to invest a portion of their funds in whatever activities -- such as motor carrier enforcement or additional anti-drunk driving education programs -- that they have identified as the most effective solutions to their specific safety needs.

Turning to our other modes of transportation, we have proposed additional provisions addressing rail and mass transportation antiterrorism, commuter rail safety, hazardous materials reauthorization, underground damage prevention, and sanitary food transportation.

RAIL AND MASS TRANSPORTATION ANTITERRORISM

On October 9, 1995, an Amtrak train operating at 50 mph, derailed near Hyder, Arizona because the railroad track structure had been sabotaged. The derailment **killed an Amtrak employee and injured 78 passengers**. On December 7, 1993, a lone **gunman with an automatic weapon** opened fire on board a rush hour Long Island Rail Road train, **killing 6 and injuring 17 others**. While travel by rail is statistically one of our safest modes, **these incidents** underscore the need to continue to take **measures against** those who would **target America's train and mass transportation riders and workers** in the name of some **political goal** or just out of sheer malice. Accordingly, in the **Surface Transportation Safety Act of 1997** we propose strengthening **criminal penalties, and expanding** the scope of the **nearly 50-year old "wrecking trains" statute**, to deter future incidents **like these**. This provision is **similar** to provisions now applicable to airlines, vessels on the high seas, and motor carriers.

RAIL SAFETY

As the **February 1996 MARC accident in Silver Spring, MD**, demonstrated, commuter railroads -- which frequently **share rail lines with freight and intercity passenger trains** -- face serious safety challenges. **Signal and train control systems** are growing increasingly complex, though communications-based **positive train control** may soon provide the potential for breakthroughs in safety.

Our rail safety proposal will ensure that safety implications will be addressed whenever federal loans or grants are made to commuter railroads. This provision will ensure that all commuter

rail investments are consistent with the highest levels of safety, thereby preventing future tragedies such as the MARC incident and fatal collisions involving commuter trains in Secaucus, NJ, in February, 1996 and in Gary, IN, in January 1993

TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

As the 1996 ValuJet episode showed, mishandling or mislabeling of hazardous materials can have major safety impacts. Accordingly, we are asking Congress to reauthorize federal hazardous materials programs and to strengthen our inspection powers and empower Federal inspectors to open suspicious packages, and bar transport if they pose a threat. We are reauthorizing our emergency response grant program and authorizing states to use a portion of those funds to help small businesses comply with the hazardous materials regulations. We are also recommending tougher penalties for those who tamper with hazardous materials labels and cause spills and other releases.

PIPELINE SAFETY

As the 1995 accident in Edison, NJ, showed, huge dangers can be created when construction excavations damage underground energy, water, sewer and communications systems. In fact, such outside force damage is the leading cause of pipeline failure in this country and a significant cause of other transportation incidents, such as interruptions in air traffic control services resulting from cut communications lines. The best way to prevent such catastrophes is through "one-call" systems which allow excavators to determine quickly and accurately whether there are pipelines in the vicinity of their work. In the Surface Transportation Safety Act of 1997, we propose to provide states with incentives to start or upgrade such systems and develop technical assistance and public education programs.

SAFE FOOD TRANSPORTATION

Finally, our Sanitary Food Transportation proposal will increase the safeguards for foodstuffs during transportation, and provide common sense government by ensuring that the government's experts in food safety take the lead in developing and enforcing these safeguards. Food safety is one of President Clinton's top priorities. Under our proposal, oversight of food transportation safety would be centralized in the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the government's expert on purity of drugs and foodstuffs. HHS will issue regulations concerning packaging and other sanitation protection and precautionary practices for shippers and carriers and others, and establish record keeping and reporting requirements. DOT will assist by providing highway and rail inspectors with enhanced food safety training, and by informing HHS and the Department of Agriculture of potential food contamination discovered in the transportation system.

Mr. Chairman, members of this committee have demonstrated their strong commitment to transportation safety. We look forward to working with you to shape a Federal program to reflect that shared commitment.

That concludes my testimony. I will be glad to answer any questions the Committee may have

STATE SAFETY BELT USE RATES BY USE LAW STATUS

Use Rate

100%

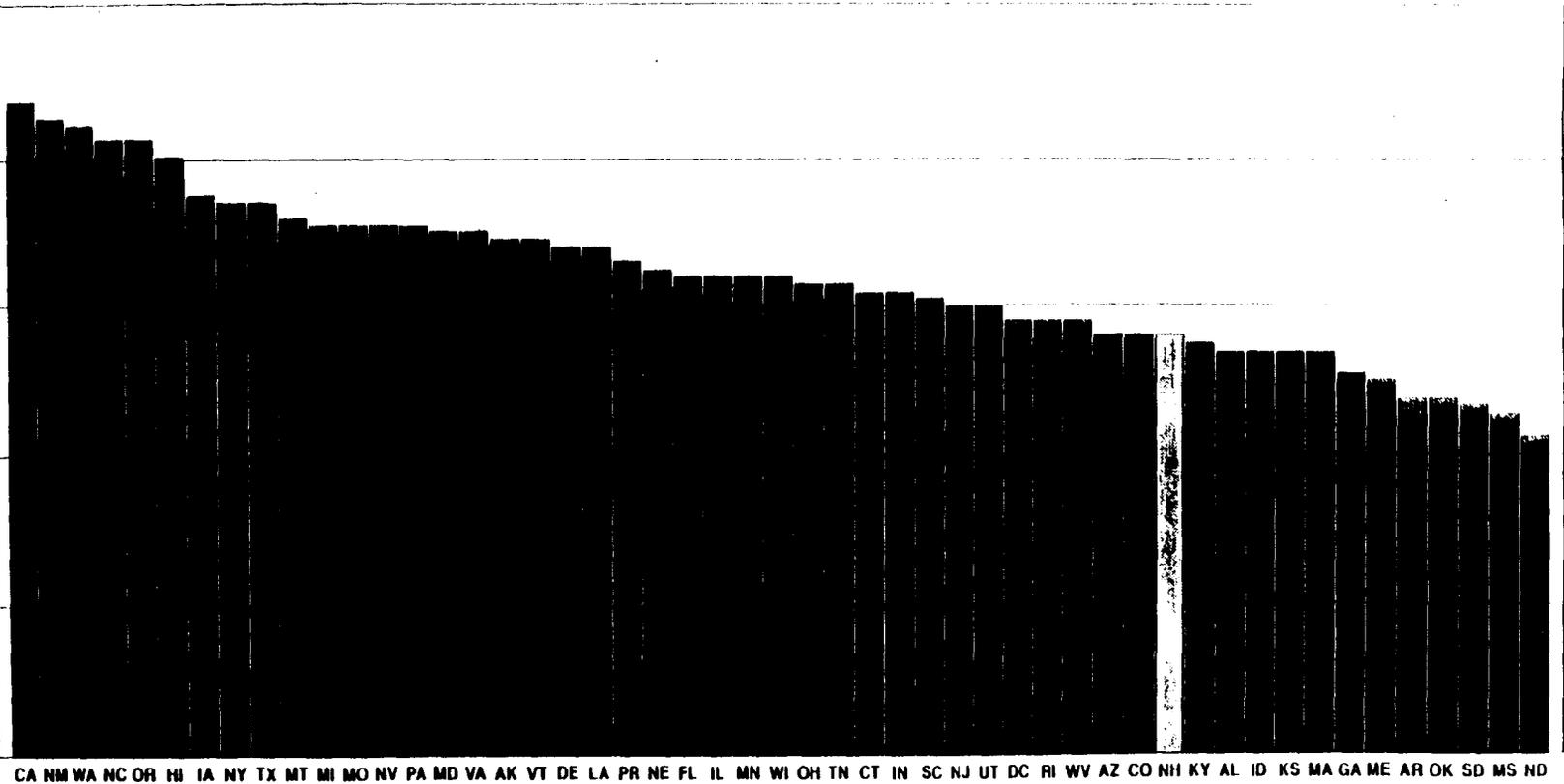
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CA NM WA NC OR HI IA NY TX MT MI MO NV PA MD VA AK VT DE LA PR NE FL IL MN WI OH TN CT IN SC NJ UT DC RI WV AZ CO NH KY AL ID KS MA GA ME AR OK SD MS ND

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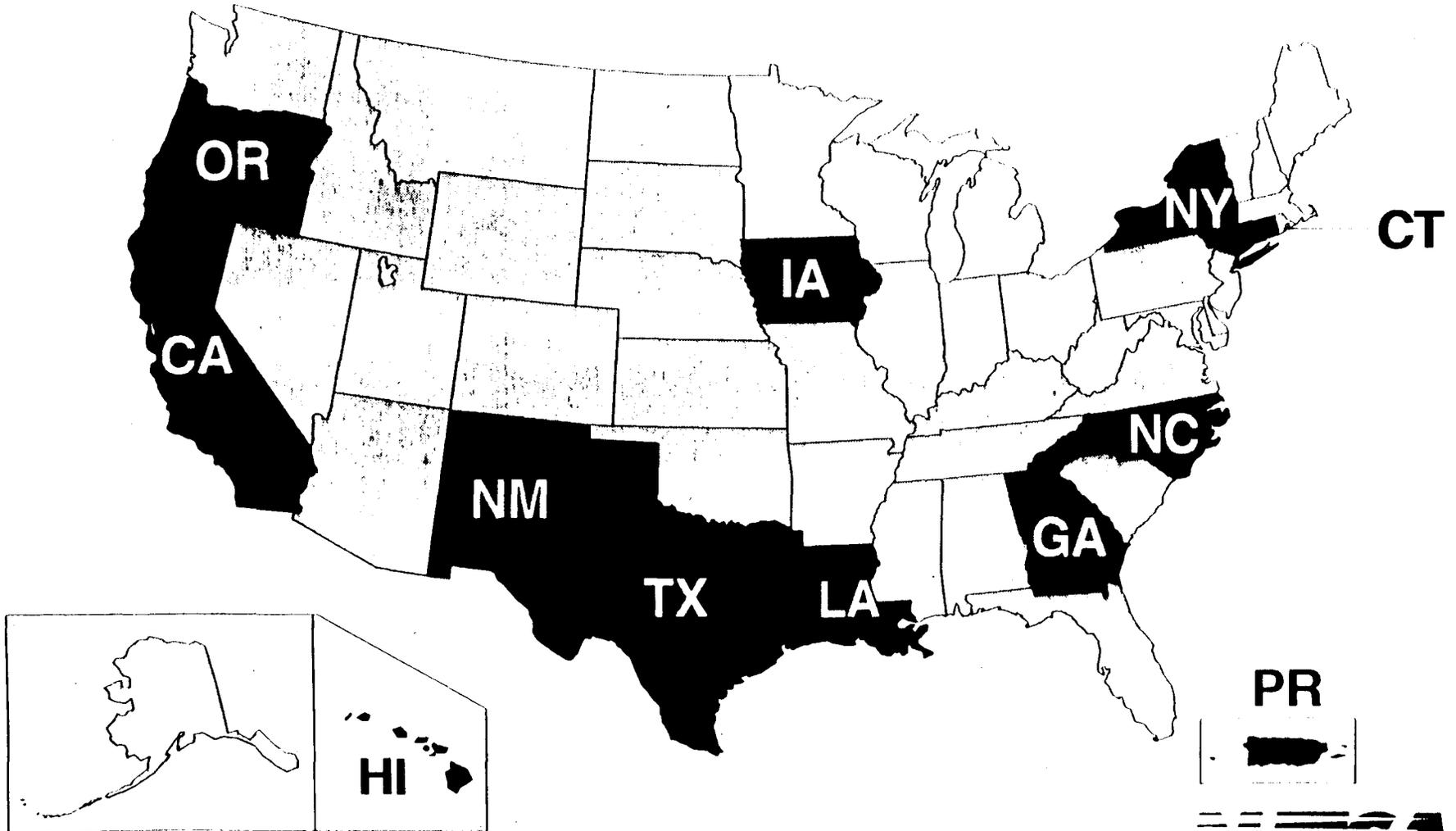
■ Secondary Law

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STATES WITH PRIMARY BELT USE LAWS

(11 States plus Puerto Rico)



1996 STATE SAFETY BELT USE RATES

