

**Remarks Prepared for
David Strickland, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
National Organizations for Youth Safety (NOYS)
Teen Distracted Driving Summit
Washington, D.C.
December 3, 2012**

Thank you, Monika Samatoni, for your kind introduction. Good morning, everyone. I am delighted to join you today at the Teen Distracted Driving Prevention Summit.

I want to thank Sandy Spavone and the National Organization for Youth Safety for your incredible

work on teen safety issues and for organizing this important event. I also want to add my thanks to all of our sponsors for your contributions to the prevention of distracted driving among teens.

To all 100 of the youth representatives here, I want to emphasize the importance of your role here today. It is absolutely essential that teens hear about the dangers of distracted driving from other teens. You have fantastic potential for getting the word out on this issue, and we are honored to support your efforts.

As you know, at NHTSA our focus is on highway safety and our passion is to reduce fatalities and injuries. We save lives in many ways: We crash-test vehicles and we research new technologies that promise to help drivers avoid collisions in the future. We also combine good laws with effective enforcement and strong education campaigns.

NHTSA and our safety partners have achieved success over the years in reducing highway deaths, but we're far from satisfied. In 2010, 32,885 people were killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes and 2,239,000 people were injured.

The costs of distraction are heartbreaking: In 2010, 3,092 people were killed and an estimated 416,000 were injured in motor vehicle crashes involving a distracted driver.

You don't need me to tell you that teenagers are especially vulnerable to distraction. Young drivers are just beginning to gain experience when they get behind the wheel, just starting to master the complex multitasking skills required to drive safely.

At the same time, your world is fundamentally defined by mobile technologies and social connectivity. And the temptation to stay connected is difficult to resist.

Just last week, a new study by State Farm Insurance found that 48 percent of drivers surveyed between the ages of 18 and 29 have surfed the web while driving. Three years ago, a similar survey reported 29 percent doing the same thing.

Don't get me wrong: The advantages of mobile technology and a connected life are tremendous.

But as you well know, there's absolutely no place for it when you're driving.

My message today is simple to say but hard to accomplish: Deaths by distraction are 100 percent

preventable, but only if drivers take the responsibility to turn off their phones and devices.

That's why it's incredibly important for all of you, our youth leaders here today, to integrate what you've learned over the three days of the Summit into an action plan on this issue that resonates with your peers.

I am so proud of what you are doing for your generation and for the Nation and wish you great success. Thank you.