



NEWS

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Physicians Call on Americans To Remember War Heroes & Traffic Crash Tragedies

Issue Support For Click It or Ticket Memorial Day Mobilization

For Immediate Release:

5/26/05 - Chicago, IL -A new physician-lead traffic safety advocacy group called End Needless Death on Our Roadways (END), is calling on Americans to remember those who haven given their lives for our country and died tragically in traffic crashes. Motorists can show their value for the gift of life by buckling up this Memorial Day weekend and every time they get in their vehicle. For those who choose not to buckle-up, END is supporting law enforcement and its zero tolerance approach to unbuckled drivers during the *Click It or Ticket* mobilization.

“Memorial Day is a day to remember those who have died in combat. This year in particular we remember those who have lost their lives fighting for our freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is also a day we must remember the tens of thousands who died, many of them needlessly, in a traffic crash,” said Dr. Andrea Barthwell, Co-Chairperson of END and former Deputy Director for Demand Reduction for the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.

“In 2004, 900 brave men and women gave their lives fighting for freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. In that same year it is projected that 42,800 died while traveling on our country’s roadways. While the men and women who died fighting for our freedom are heroes, unfortunately many of those who died on our roadways are victims of poor choice,” she continued.

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“It is tragic because many of those traffic deaths simply did not have to happen. Of the passenger vehicle occupants killed in 2004, it is estimated well over 50 percent were not wearing a safety belt. Even more heart wrenching, a disproportionate number of these fatalities were teenagers and other young people,” Barthwell added.

“While we can do nothing to bring back our war heroes or those who tragically died in a car crash, we can remember them. As a sign of remembrance and as an expression of our value for the gift of life, we are asking all American to buckle up this Memorial Day and everyday,” according to Dr. Thomas Esposito, Co –Chairperson of END and Vice Chairman of the Chicago Chapter of the American College of Surgeons Committee on Trauma.

“Physicians and other healthcare workers see first hand the severe injury and death that often result from not wearing a safety belt. We see the anguish on patient’s faces when they are told they will never walk again or their lives as they know them are irreversibly changed. We also see the pain of loss when we tell a parent or loved one that their child, spouse, parent or friend is never coming home again,” he added.

“That’s why doctors and other health care workers are also on the front line in this effort to increase safety belt usage. Safety belts are the difference between a life and future saved or a life and future lost. It’s as simple as that,” Esposito continued.

The physician and other healthcare members of END are joining forces in support of the nationwide *Click It or Ticket* Mobilization, which began on May 23 and runs through June 5. Local, county and state law enforcement throughout the country will increase enforcement of safety belt laws. Those who fail to buckle up will be issued a ticket, no discussion, no excuses.

The goal of the effort is to boost the safety belt usage rate and reduce fatalities, with a special emphasis on young adults. Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of death for every age, 3 through 33, in the United States. The past few years have shown a significant increase in safety belt use, but more must be done to sustain and grow these gains.

“Please buckle up and make sure your friends and family buckle up every time they get in a car. Remember, *Click it or Ticket*,” Esposito concluded.

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