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SEPTEMBER 2, 1976

Office of the White House Press Secretary

THE WHITE HOUSE

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

As we approach the Labor Day holiday, travelers once again face the hazard of traffic deaths and injuries on our Nation's highways.

More than 45,000 people died in motor vehicle accidents in 1975. Four hundred of these were killed during the Labor Day holiday -- an 18 percent increase over similar non-holiday periods.

The appalling loss of life which continues to take place on our Nation's roads is a matter of great concern to me and a majority of our citizens.

We should be encouraged, however, by the significant reduction in total traffic fatalities we have seen in the past two years -- a decrease of some 9,000 lives each year.

Safety authorities agree that the primary cause of this dramatic drop in fatalities is public observance of the National Maximum Speed Limit. It is difficult to escape the obvious conclusion that the Nation's highways are safer now than they were when the legal speed limit was higher.

Some Americans may dispute the value and the importance of fuel conservation gains achieved by compliance with speed limits. But the dramatic improvement in highway safety and the savings in lives which result cannot be over-emphasized.

By complying with our traffic laws this Labor Day weekend, we can all improve our chances for a safe trip. I urge all Americans to have a safe as well as a happy weekend.

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