



ADVOCATES
for Highway & Auto Safety

ABOUT ADVOCATES

MISSION

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety is an alliance of consumer, medical, public health, and safety groups and insurance companies and agents working together to make America's roads safer. **Advocates** encourages the adoption of federal and state laws, policies and programs that save lives and reduce injuries. By joining its resources with others, **Advocates** helps build coalitions to increase participation of a wide array of groups in public policy initiatives which advance highway and auto safety.

HISTORY AND STRUCTURE

Advocates was founded in 1989 by the heads of a number of major property and casualty insurance companies and several prominent consumer and safety leaders. These two communities share virtually identical goals on highway and auto safety issues.

Advocates' Board of Directors is made up of equal numbers of insurance organizations and consumer groups. The insurer members provide the financial resources of **Advocates**, but both groups share the responsibility for establishing program and policy priorities. All members provide expertise, outreach to constituents, research and other assistance to help the organization achieve its goals.

OBJECTIVES

According to the federal government, each year motor vehicle crashes claim more than 42,000 lives, are responsible for millions of injuries, and cost Americans \$230 billion in property loss, medical and emergency bills, productivity loss, and other related costs. **Advocates** is pursuing policies and standards that will mitigate this wasteful tragedy.

Advocates' unique alliance combines the perspectives and resources of its member organizations to implement specific strategies for achieving policy goals. By working with other coalitions and organizations, **Advocates** helps to maximize effectiveness and avoid duplication of effort on numerous public policy endeavors.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES

The organization develops a program plan each year to identify opportunities, establish priorities and allocate resources. **Advocates'** staff tracks legislation, analyzes issues, conducts research, develops strategy, participates in existing coalitions and organizes new ones when needed, engages in lobbying, distributes action alerts, files technical comments on federal regulatory actions, provides information to

and interviews with the media, writes issue fact sheets and other publications, and maintains an extensive database of grassroots activists interested in highway and auto safety issues.

ISSUES

Advocates addresses a number of critical issues regarding federal and state policy, including:

- **Occupant Protection:** safety belts; child restraints and booster seats; air bags; unattended children in and around vehicles; and motorcycle helmets.
- **Vehicle Crashworthiness:** air bags; improved head injury and side impact crash protection; upgraded standards for light trucks and vans; and rollover, roof crush, occupant ejection, pedestrian, child safety and other crash protection standards.
- **Impaired Driving:** .08% blood alcohol content (BAC) laws; administrative license suspension; open container; repeat offender; ignition interlock laws, and underage drinking.
- **Speeding:** reasonable speed limits and increased enforcement on all roads and in neighborhoods; photo-enforcement; reconsideration of a modified national maximum speed limit; and industry restraints on promotion and portrayal of excessive speed in advertising.
- **Road, Bridge and Intersection Safety:** improved highway and bridge design standards; traffic control devices and roadside appurtenances; implementation of photo-enforcement to combat red light running and speeding; and general improvement of intersections and pedestrian crosswalks.
- **Motor Carrier Safety:** improved border inspection and safety oversight of motor carriers entering the U.S.; reasonable minimum age of 21 for truck drivers; revision and enforcement of hours of service regulations; freeze on double and triple trailer trucks; truck size and weight limits; motorcoach safety reform; and vehicle safety enhancements.
- **Teen Driving:** optimum graduated driver licensing (GDL) laws for beginning teen drivers, in state legislatures and Congress.
- **Consumer Protection:** expanded and improved consumer information; auto crash parts; tire safety; anti-auto theft legislation; and bumper strength and quality.

Incumbent in all these areas is adequate funding through authorization of programs and appropriation of funds. **Advocates** monitors and actively participates in the congressional authorization and appropriations processes to influence whenever possible the allocation of Highway Trust Fund and other money for safety programs and ensure congressional oversight of the regulatory agencies responsible for highway and auto safety.

OUTLOOK

Two great strengths of **Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety** are its single-minded dedication to the adoption of public policies that save lives, prevent injuries and reduce costs, and the diversity of organizational support for its mission and in its membership. Combining the resources, expertise and commitment of the property/casualty insurance industry and consumer and safety organizations, **Advocates** plays a dynamic role in developing legislative and regulatory policies, expanding public understanding of highway and auto safety issues and encouraging coalition efforts to reduce the human and economic costs of death and injury on our roadways.