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MADD Founder Candace Lightner Teams with National Road Safety Foundation To Launch First-Ever National Passenger Safety Week

**Passengers Make Up 62 Percent of Traffic Deaths; New Multi-Year Campaign
Will Encourage Passengers to Speak Up for Their Own Safety**

NEW YORK, Jan. 19, 2022 -- [We Save Lives](#), a non-profit group organized by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) founder Candace Lightner, is teaming with The National Road Safety Foundation to declare the last week of January (Jan. 23 – 29, 2022) as the first-ever National Passenger Safety Week. The purpose of this multi-year campaign is to empower passengers to “speak up for their safety,” when in a car that is being driven unsafely. In 2019, passengers accounted for 62 percent of all traffic fatalities nationwide.

“Whether a driver is impaired by alcohol or drugs, is speeding or driving too aggressively, or can’t stay awake at the wheel, bad driving choices put passengers at risk of serious injury or death,” said [Candace Lightner](#), who has been a leading traffic safety advocate since founding MADD in 1980 after losing her 13-year-old daughter Cari to a multiple repeat offender drunk driver. “Passengers need to speak up when they see dangerous driving behavior,” she said. “We hope this ongoing campaign will empower passengers to be safety advocates, to the point where it becomes acceptable – even expected – for passengers to speak up when confronted with an irresponsible driver.”

[The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that 38,680 people died in traffic crashes in 2020.](#) “Many of those lives might have been saved had a passenger in the car insisted that the driver slow down, stop texting or not get behind the wheel in the first place,” Lightner noted.



“Much of being a safe driver comes from education,” said Michelle Anderson, director of operations at [The National Road Safety Foundation](#), a non-profit founded 60 years ago to promote safe driving behavior through education. “When people are knowledgeable about driving risks like impairment, speed, aggression and drowsiness, there’s a better chance they will avoid taking those risks. The National Passenger Safety Campaign will educate and empower passengers about how they can save lives by calling out unsafe driving in the car as it happens.”

“If only” becomes a common theme when talking to the families of crash victims and survivors. [Michelle Johnson whose son Connor was killed](#) as a passenger in a single-vehicle crash with a distracted driver, encourages parents to educate their children about the importance of speaking up or not getting in the car with someone who is drunk, drugged, or distracted. “if only Connor had stopped his friend from driving distracted, they both would be alive today.”

Plans for the ongoing campaign include the creation and distribution of materials about how to speak out, with scripts and videos giving role-play examples of when and how to speak up. People will also be encouraged to sign the [“Courage to Intervene”](#) promise. The campaign will be supported by public service announcements and seasonal news releases, as well as ongoing appearances on local and national media. More than three dozen traffic safety advocacy groups, state and national agencies have joined the campaign and more are coming on board to get the word out to their constituents.

Visit nationalpassengersafety.org for more information and to sign the Courage to Intervene promise.

We Save Lives, founded by in 2014 by Candace Lightner, who started Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), is an umbrella organization of more than 50 highway safety advocates, law enforcement agencies, companies, local, state, national and international organizations, victim’s/survivor groups, and others who want to stop the carnage on our highways.

The National Road Safety Foundation, now in its 60th year, produces free videos and teaching materials on distracted driving, speed and aggression, impaired driving, drowsy driving, driver proficiency, pedestrian safety and a host of other safety issues. It also sponsors contests to engage teens in promoting safe driving to their peers and in their communities, partnering nationally with youth advocacy groups including SADD and FCCLA and regionally with auto shows in Los Angeles, Chicago and Washington D.C.