

## Fewer People Injured in Highway Crashes Every Year, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters Announces

by NAMIC

The number of people injured in crashes on our nation's highways has declined every year since 1995, Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters announced in May, noting that there were 4.8 percent fewer injuries in 2006 (2,575,000) than in 2005. The trend also extends to teenaged drivers, with a more than 6 percent decline from 2005 to 2006.

Still, the new data released by the U.S. Department of Transportation indicates that teen injuries make up more than 16 percent of overall crash-related injuries, even though they represent only 8 percent of the driving public, Peters noted after meeting with the Severna Park Senior High School chapter of Students Against Destructive Decisions.

"In the test of life, teenage drivers are failing at twice the rate as the rest of us. That's a safety grade none of us is willing to accept," Peters said. "Just as you hit the books to turn things around in class, we're going to redouble our efforts to make our roads safer and our teenagers healthier."

To help improve teen road safety, Peters announced a nationwide competition to develop the next generation of advertising and educational materials with a fresh focus to encourage teenagers to drive safely. The winning campaign will receive \$5,000 and broad distribution to where it can do the most good with the help of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

She also announced that the Department of Transportation will award \$300,000 each to two states to promote seat belt use in their local communities through creative and highly visible law enforcement efforts. She also said two states would each be awarded \$100,000 to help combat drunk driving through the use of promising technologies that would disable a vehicle if a driver is legally impaired.

"You are not invincible," Peters said to a group of 50 juniors and seniors at Severna Park Senior High School. "Take your driving seriously. Put down your cell phone and stop text messaging. You can get back to your friends once you've turned off the ignition, but you can never get your life back."

For more information about the injury numbers, the safe driving competition, and the seat belt and technology grants, please visit [www.nhtsa.gov](http://www.nhtsa.gov).

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Source: National Highway Traffic Administration

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