

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 9, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

I am writing to inquire about the Department of Transportation's work on highway safety. Unfortunately, as you are aware, there have been 245 traffic fatalities in Connecticut so far this year, including a law enforcement officer and a state employee. In May, Connecticut Trooper First Class Aaron Pelletier was struck and killed in the line of duty while working at a traffic stop on Interstate 84. In July, a Connecticut Department of Transportation worker, Andrew DiDomenico, died after being struck by a vehicle on Interstate 91. While these two accidents garnered significant attention across the state, there are many more families dealing with the pain of losing a loved one in a traffic accident.

My office and I regularly hear from constituents about roadway safety. The primary issues identified are drivers traveling at high speed, ignoring traffic signs, and driving while distracted. During my annual walk across Connecticut, I spoke with a group of road construction workers who told me that they are noticing an uptick in dangerous driving behavior. I also regularly meet with a group of middle school children who advise me on a range of policy issues, and in our conversations these students regularly tell me how reckless driving can make their walk to school scary and more dangerous.

While I understand there is no perfect policy solution or initiative that will eliminate traffic accidents completely, I am writing to inquire what more can be done to protect people on our roadways and seek your Department's expert opinion on best practices to decrease roadway fatalities. To that end, I am requesting your answers and input on the following questions:

1. What specific measures is the Department of Transportation implementing under the National Roadway Safety Strategy to address the alarming rise in traffic fatalities, particularly in Northeast states like Connecticut?
2. What strategies are being developed to combat issues such as high-speed driving, ignoring traffic signs, and distracted driving? Are there any new initiatives on these issues forthcoming?
3. Has there been an increase in accidents involving young or less experienced drivers? What targeted programs or campaigns does the Department plan to introduce to improve their safety on the roads?
4. How is the Department of Transportation engaging with local communities, such as schools and construction sites, to gather insights on roadway safety concerns and to promote safer driving practices?

5. How can state governments like Connecticut better collaborate with the federal government to enhance roadway safety and address specific local concerns?
6. What additional actions can Congress take to better enable your agency to address this issue?

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I look forward to continuing to work with you to build safer roadways that improve safety and the travel experience for the American people.

Sincerely,



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator