

Bruce on Bikers' Rights

© Copyright 2005-2009 Bruce Arnold, All Rights Reserved
<http://BikersRights.LdrLongDistanceRider.com>

October 2009 | Special Edition

MOTORCYCLISTS SLIGHTED BY USDOT DISTRACTED DRIVING SUMMIT

Event Staged as Pretext for More Government Intervention



Last week, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and the Department of Transportation staged a two-day Distracted Driving Summit in Washington DC:

<http://tinyurl.com/ncozgx>

Of all motorists, motorcyclists are the most vulnerable to injury or death as a result of accidents caused by distracted drivers. Yet for some reason, neither the American Motorcyclist Association ("AMA"), nor the Motorcycle Riders Foundation ("MRF"), nor any of the attorney-fronting faux MROs were invited to sit on any Summit panel, give a presentation, or even make a formal statement. In fact, neither "motorcycles" nor "motorcyclists" were even mentioned in the Summit agenda:

<http://tinyurl.com/yalgzex>

Why motorcyclists were slighted is a mystery. Another mystery is how the federal government managed to issue press release DOT 156-09 summarizing the conclusions and recommendations coming from the Summit at 1:07pm ET, when the Summit did not officially conclude until 23 minutes later:

<http://tinyurl.com/yekqh2x>

Could it be that the desired outcomes from the Summit were determined in advance, and that the event itself was merely pretext for a pre-determined government agenda? Well if that was the case, it would be no historical first... But either way, it would appear that motorcycle riders have no explicit place in that agenda, nor were we mentioned in Ray LaHood's opening remarks that set the stage for this choreographed demonstration of "democracy in action":

<http://tinyurl.com/ya6uko5>

One would hope that the editor of "Seventeen Magazine", along with all the other traffic safety experts on LaHood's blue-ribbon panels, would have at least recognized the existence of motorcycles as an accepted form of motorized transportation, and acknowledged the right of motorcyclists to safely share the road. To determine whether that was indeed the case, I invite you to watch the recorded two days of webcasts here:

<http://tinyurl.com/ndklek>

If two days is more time than you can spare, you can alternatively read the detailed notes taken by veteran bikers' rights activist Lynn Wesley, who made that investment on your behalf:

<http://tinyurl.com/y9p3cm8>

<http://tinyurl.com/ybwill7j>

Expect your conclusion to coincide with this observation made on Day 2 by AMA representative and Summit attendee Imre Sautzer: "For many years, individuals and groups in the motorcycling community have been working with all levels of government (particularly state legislators) to insure all

vehicle operators are held accountable for their actions. With all the recent interest to address distracted driving in our state legislatures, we believe practical and enforceable laws that protect all roadway users, particularly vulnerable users such as motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians, are essential. But I'm concerned that much of the research and technology discussions that took place yesterday paid little or no attention to our place in the transportation mix."

Another conclusion you might reach is that the principal piece of federal legislation for which this Summit was staged is the "Alert Drivers Act" (S1536/HR3535):

<http://tinyurl.com/y8h52a5>

<http://tinyurl.com/ye6cz2r>

If passed, this bill will reduce the amount of Federal highway funding available to States that do not enact a law prohibiting an individual from sending or receiving text messages while operating a motor vehicle. Some will call this a blackmail bill ... some will label it feel-good legislation ... some will say it'll make no difference ... and some will assert the reverse. I say it's a far, far cry from what I was hoping for. As I proposed to Secretary LaHood a few weeks ago, "...motorists who engage in discretionary distractions must be held accountable for the harm they cause." And I am sure Summit attendee Greg Zaffke II and thousands of others who have lost love ones to careless cagers will agree that bans on texting will do nothing to mitigate a myriad of other discretionary distractions (like painting fingernails) which are just as dangerous. I likewise expect little argument to the assertion that distracted driving (or FTY-ROWV) penalties that are either difficult to enforce, or not sufficiently severe, will probably be ignored:

<http://tinyurl.com/yaa9nl6>

There is some irony associated with the "Alert Drivers Act". The puppets we call politicians, and the powers pulling their strings, not only know but rely on the ease with which the American people can be distracted from what's really going on around them. And I can't help but wonder if they might be reluctant to mandate we pay attention when we are driving, for fear we might start paying attention when we are not:

<http://tinyurl.com/ycdj6ja>

In closing, I wish to thank motorcyclists' rights activists and advocates Lynn Wesley, "Hairy George" Nitsky, Imre Sautzer and Greg Zaffke II (BlackNailBrigade.com) for their contributions to and inputs from the Summit. I also encourage all riders and freedom fighters to join Greg in Lake County Illinois this coming Thursday morning, October 8th, for his "Nail Polish Crash Awareness Ride and Protest" to coincide with the arraignment of Lora Hunt on six counts of reckless homicide:

<http://tinyurl.com/ydrpj9z>

May justice be served...

Speaking strictly for myself and no other individuals or organizations,

Bruce Arnold

Bruce@LdrLongDistanceRider.com
Co-Moderator, Bruce-n-RC's Biker Forum
Author and Publisher, LdrLongDistanceRider.com
Mile Eater Gold Member, Iron Butt Association (IBA)
Sustaining Member, Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF)
2009 Chairman's Circle, American Motorcyclist Association (AMA)
Signatory, 911 Truth Statement & Petition (911Truth.org|ae911Truth.org)