

## UPCOMING TRAININGS & CONFERENCES

NDAA is making its National Courses available virtually in light of health and safety concerns over COVID-19. Check out a full list of NDAA's virtual learning sessions at [ndaa.org/training-courses/](https://ndaa.org/training-courses/).

**NDAA's Mastering Masking Digital Course/ On Demand Training (CLE Available)**  
[ndaa.org/training/mastering-masking-2/](https://ndaa.org/training/mastering-masking-2/)

**NDAA's Human Trafficking and the Impact on Commercial Driver's Licenses/On Demand Training**  
[ndaa.org/training/human-trafficking-and-the-impact-on-commercial-drivers-licenses/](https://ndaa.org/training/human-trafficking-and-the-impact-on-commercial-drivers-licenses/)

**NDAA's Prosecuting DUI Cases Online Course/ On Demand Training (CLE Available)**  
[ndaa.org/training/prosecuting-dui-cases/](https://ndaa.org/training/prosecuting-dui-cases/)

**Ethical Issues in Charging Considerations**  
June 7, 2021 @ 1:00-2:00 pm (ET)

**Well-being Taskforce: It Is a Real Thing—The Impact of Secondary Trauma on Our Most Effective Prosecutors**  
June 8, 2021 @ 2:00-3:00 pm (ET)

**Prosecuting Carjacking Cases in Juvenile Court**  
June 9, 2021 @ 3:00 pm (ET)

**The Anti-Racist Prosecutor II: Strategies for Action**  
June 10, 2021 @ 11:30 am-1:30 pm (ET)

## RESOURCES

**Impaired Driving Resources**  
[ndaa.org/programs/ntl/](https://ndaa.org/programs/ntl/)

**CDL-Related Resources**  
[ndaa.org/programs/ntl/commercial-drivers-license/](https://ndaa.org/programs/ntl/commercial-drivers-license/)

### NDAA STAFF

**Executive Director** Nelson O. Bunn, Jr.  
**Chief Operating Officer** Christine Mica

### THE NATIONAL TRAFFIC LAW CENTER

**Director**  
Joanne E. Thomka [jthomka@ndaajustice.org](mailto:jthomka@ndaajustice.org)

**Senior Attorneys**  
M. Kimberly Brown [mkbrown@ndaajustice.org](mailto:mkbrown@ndaajustice.org)  
Jim Camp [jcamp@ndaajustice.org](mailto:jcamp@ndaajustice.org)

**Staff Attorney**  
Erin Inman [erinman@ndaajustice.org](mailto:erinman@ndaajustice.org)

The National Traffic Law Center is a division of the National District Attorneys Association. This document was prepared under Cooperative Agreement Number 693JJ91950010 from the U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official positions or policies of the Department of Transportation or the National District Attorneys Association.



Volume 29, Issue 5 | May 2021



## Bright Lights Ahead

### What to Expect from Congress and the Biden Administration on Transportation Policy

By NDAA's Frank Russo

Following the 2020 elections, a new Congress and White House began an ambitious agenda focused on addressing the coronavirus pandemic and reinvigorating the American economy. While most of the public attention remained focused on the country's re-opening, the new administration set its sights on infrastructure, introducing a wide-sweeping plan to invest in America's roadways. Congress responded, with both Republicans and Democrats beginning to form their own proposals to change the transportation landscape. With lawmaker's attention turning to infrastructure, the traffic safety community is gearing up for a busy summer.

President Biden gathered the press in late March to announce what would become the administration's *American Jobs Plan*. The six-prong approach would prioritize fixing highways, upgrading ports and transit systems, creating new job opportunities, and reinvigorating our nation's infrastructure systems. Included in this plan is a focus on the significant back log of repairs needed for highways across the country with an aim on lowering the country's high traffic fatality rates. Built into this

plan is a request that Congress invest an additional \$621 billion in transportation infrastructure with the goal of developing new Federal grant programs and strengthening existing programs to support new projects to improve the transportation grid and support traffic safety. Within the President's proposal is nearly \$20 billion invested in the *Safe Streets for All* program that would fund state and local *Vision Zero* plans to reduce crashes and fatalities, with a focus on cyclists and pedestrians. Although some funds would be shifted towards the traffic safety community, a majority would be to incentivize states to take steps in widening bike lanes and reducing fatalities through speed control. These programs do still present an opportunity for the traffic safety community to receive new grants to decrease fatalities on the road and prevent incidents by motorists breaking criminal laws.

As transportation policy tops the agenda for the administration, it comes as no surprise that competing proposals have begun to shape the landscape of the 117th Congress. The Democrat caucus has largely joined the White House's call for infrastructure spending, planning their own comprehensive investment and overhaul of the Country's transportation and roadway policy. Included in this proposal is full funding of the administration's request including \$115 billion to repair and rebuild bridges, highways and roads, \$100 billion to expand high-speed broadband across the entire country, and \$100 billion to expand and improve power lines and spur a shift to clean energy. Republican leadership in Congress has responded with a plan of their own, closely mirroring the policy objectives of the administration, but at a much smaller price tag. Coming in at about half the amount offered by Congressional Democrats, the Republican plan similarly focuses on rebuilding the country's roads, bridges, and highways, while offering a small increase to grant programs focused on highway safety. With lawmakers on both sides of the aisle putting transportation policy in their sights, the question is what role can prosecutors play in this policy debate?

As transportation policy tops the agenda for the administration, it comes as no surprise that competing proposals have begun to shape the landscape of the 117th Congress.

### COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE VIOLATIONS: ENFORCEMENT, PROSECUTION, & REPORTING



This course is designed to assist prosecutors, law enforcement personnel, judges, court clerks, motor vehicle administrators, and other allied professionals with vested interests in Commercial Driver's License (CDL) enforcement and public safety, overcome the challenges involved throughout all stages of Commercial Motor Vehicle safety enforcement.

*CLE credit available*

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Joanne Thomka  
NTLC Director, NDAA  
jthomka@ndaajustice.org

Jim Camp  
Senior Attorney, NDAA  
jcamp@ndaajustice.org

**2021 CDL CONFERENCE**  
**JUNE 22-24, 2021 VIRTUAL**

**► [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER NOW](#)**

HOSTED BY: National District  
Attorneys Association's  
National Traffic Law Center



The National District Attorneys Association (NDAA) has worked alongside our partners in the traffic community to identify key proposals that focus on providing more resources to prosecutors and the field, while promoting improvements in the criminal justice system. Within these priorities is a specific legislative proposal that directly affects how prosecutors and police handle driver's license suspensions, fines, and administrative fees. Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Roger Wicker (R-MS) bipartisan *Driving for Opportunity Act* is once again on the table as this unique legislation avoids penalizing jurisdictions, instead creating a new funding stream to reward states and localities that do not suspend, revoke, or refuse to renew a driver's license of a person or refuse to renew a registration of a motor vehicle for failure to pay a civil or criminal fine or fee. Within the bill, states and localities that adopt this policy would be eligible for \$20 million in new federal grants to recover the costs incurred by the state or jurisdiction that is now reinstating the driver's licenses.

Yet another area where policymakers have expressed interest in funding the traffic safety community is on drug-impaired driving. Former prosecutor and current Congresswoman Kathleen Rice (D-NY) has partnered with Congressman Troy Balderson (R-OH) to introduce the *Drug-Impaired Driving Education Act*, legislation that would establish a new annual federal grant program to provide \$5 million in funding for states to educate the public on the dangers of drug-impaired driving. Importantly, these funds would be open to all sectors of the traffic community, including prosecutors, law enforcement agencies, and safety advocates. Prosecutors are also acting proactively to push policies to support the traffic safety community by partnering with organizations like Responsibility.Org to push for less grant restrictions and broader funding for initiatives that would train prosecutors and law enforcement officers on handling traffic safety investigations involving drug-impaired driving. These combined efforts have put the issues of improving traffic safety and reducing roadway fatalities squarely on Congress's radar in 2021.

*Drug-Impaired Driving Education Act* ... would establish a new annual federal grant program to provide \$5 million in funding for states to educate the public on the dangers of drug-impaired driving.

For the first time in decades, the White House and Congress are leading important conversations on a historic investment in our nation's infrastructure. Resourcing the traffic safety community must remain an essential part of these discussions and NDAA is working closely with Congress to ensure this is the case. Lawmakers have the opportunity to drive funding and push policies that will ensure prosecutors, law enforcement and advocates can continue to make the roads safe in communities across the country.

---

To learn more about NDAA's work on policy and legislative issues, you are encouraged to contact Frank Russo, Director of Government and Legislative Affairs. He can be reached at [frusso@ndaajustice.org](mailto:frusso@ndaajustice.org) or at 703-519-1655. Prior to joining NDAA, Frank worked on Capitol Hill as a Law Clerk with both the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary and the U.S. House Judiciary Committee on the Subcommittee for Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security. He is a graduate of The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, in Washington, D.C. where he currently serves on the school's Alumni Council, and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia. He holds a license to practice law in the State of Georgia.