**2020 THANKSGIVING**

**SAMPLE OP-ED**

**SOCIAL NORMING VERSION**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [Date]**

**CONTACT: [Name, Phone Number, Email]**

**Note: Before filling in the names of the organization and organization spokesperson, you MUST contact them for permission to use their names in this op-ed. Also, you must get their approval for the language of their quotations, and any changes or additions they may require. Only after this is done should you issue the op-ed.**

**#BoycottBlackoutWednesday:**

**Remind Your Friends and Family That *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving***

Thanksgiving is a time for counting blessings and being around loved ones. This Thanksgiving holiday, as you head out to celebrate, commit to sober driving and remember this important message: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving.* Sadly, this time of year can be a deadly one, as drunk drivers often take to the streets after an evening of merrymaking. To make matters worse, “Blackout Wednesday,” which this year falls on November 25, 2020, has become a trend during the Thanksgiving holiday, highlighting — and even encouraging — the heavy consumption of alcohol on Thanksgiving Eve.

To help keep Americans safe on the roads, the U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is teaming up with **[State/Local Organization]** to spread the message that drunk driving is dangerous and illegal, period. Nationally, it is illegal to drive with a BAC of .08 or higher, except in Utah, where the BAC limit is .05. If you are under the influence of any impairing substance this Thanksgiving holiday, or any day, hand the keys to a sober friend instead of driving yourself home.

This Thanksgiving holiday, NHTSA and its partners are conducting a social media blitz featuring the hashtag #BoycottBlackoutWednesday to help deliver lifesaving messages into the public conversation and encourage positive actions that can help reduce danger on the roadways.

Drunk-driving-related crashes spike during the Thanksgiving holiday season. According to NHTSA, from 2014 to 2018, 138 drivers involved in fatal crashes on Thanksgiving Eve (6 p.m. to 5:59 a.m.) were alcohol-impaired, and over the entire holiday period (6 p.m. the Wednesday before Thanksgiving through 5:59 a.m. the Monday after Thanksgiving) more than 800 people died in alcohol-impaired crashes. In fact, during the 2018 Thanksgiving holiday period, more than three times as many drivers involved in fatal crashes were alcohol-impaired during nighttime hours than during the day.

The bottom line is this: If you know you’re headed out for a night of drinking, make sure you plan for a sober ride home. It is never safe to get behind the wheel of a vehicle while drunk or otherwise impaired. Remember: *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*.

**Options to Get Home Safely**

If you’re planning to head out to the bar or to parties during the Thanksgiving holiday, make sure you plan for a sober ride home. Don’t leave your house without a plan on how to get home safely — once you start drinking you likely won’t make good choices. Here are a few tips to help you prepare for a safe night out.

* Remember that it is never okay to drink and drive. Even if you’ve had only one alcoholic beverage, designate a sober driver or plan to use public transportation or a ride service to get home safely.
* If available, use your community’s sober ride program **[Insert your local sober ride program specifics here].**
* If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact **[Local Law Enforcement].**
* Do you have a friend who is about to drink and drive? Take the keys away and make arrangements to get your friend home safely.

By working together, we can save lives and help keep America’s roadways safe. Make sure you make it to the Thanksgiving table. Please join us in sharing the lifesaving message *Buzzed Driving Is Drunk Driving*,and use the hashtag #BoycottBlackoutWednesday during the holiday weekend.

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