



Dear Senator,

As you might already be aware, a constituent in your jurisdiction has died as a result of a motor vehicle crash. NDACo is committed to North Dakota's Vision Zero safety initiative which has the goal of eliminating fatalities and serious injuries caused by motor vehicle crashes. It is in that light we pause to remember Amelia Johnson.

Amelia Johnson was killed in a crash on Highway 85 approximately 12 miles west of Watford City on January 9, 2020. Ms. Johnson was traveling westbound on Highway 85, when her car swerved into oncoming traffic and struck a vehicle head-on. Amelia sustained fatal injuries and was pronounced deceased on scene. Road conditions were good and the weather was overcast at the time of the accident. Ms. Johnson was wearing her seatbelt and airbags deployed. She was 58 years old.

Even one loss of life on our roads is too much. Crashes are not accidents. Most crashes are predictable and preventable. In North Dakota, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injuries and related deaths. Over 2,800 people were involved in severe motor vehicle crashes in North Dakota in the last five years (2014 to 2018). Tragically, that resulted in 600 deaths and more than 2,200 serious bodily injuries. This cost is staggering and unacceptable.

This brings me to the point of this letter. First, and most importantly, we need to remember those we have lost and the family and friends that have also been impacted by this incident. Second, we must recommit ourselves to finding solutions to avoid these tragedies. We cannot just accept these crashes as a way of life that cannot be changed. Therefore, we must take a moment to closely evaluate each incident and determine what all of us could have done or what we can now do to stop these types of crashes so we can someday live in a world where letters like this are a thing of the past.

The good news is there are solutions available and we can all play a vital role helping to implement them. Required seat belt use, road safety audits, improved signage, infrastructure safety improvements, public education/outreach, high visibility enforcement, improved ambulance/medical response and support for technological advancements for both roads and vehicles are all proven solutions and are well within reach. NDACo and all the traffic safety partners we work with are committed to these ideas. I also look forward to hearing any ideas you might have that will help fix this solvable problem.

Working together, we will achieve North Dakota's Vision Zero goal ~ zero fatalities.

Thank you for your time to review this information. If you have any questions, please contact me at 701-328-7300 or [terry.traynor@ndaco.org](mailto:terry.traynor@ndaco.org) or Ryan Gellner, the NDACo Traffic Safety Outreach Program Coordinator, at 701-364-9402 or [ryan.gellner@ndaco.org](mailto:ryan.gellner@ndaco.org).

Sincerely,

Terry Traynor, Executive Director  
North Dakota Association of Counties