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January 28, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Subject: Plan Colombia, Demand for Drugs and the Driver's License

Dear President Bush:

The National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration has highlighted the results of a study that indicates that in a third of the young people killed in a two-year period in car accidents in California, alcohol and marijuana were detected. And more than half of the victims had consumed a drug or drugs other than alcohol [see NHTSA's Highway Safety Deskbook, Part Five (Alcohol and Drugs)].

Anyone who operates a motor vehicle, and thus subjects himself or herself and others to a degree of risk, should be drug-free. Making random drug testing a condition of holding a driver's license would make our highways substantially safer. In those employment contexts where its purpose is to safeguard the public, random drug testing has been remarkably effective. If the military and the airlines can do it, why can't the rest of us?

The anti-drug program established by the Federal Transit Administration (Department of Transportation) for its employees could serve as a model for state-administered initiatives with application to citizen-drivers [see Title 49, CFR Part 653].

Safeguarding the public on our highways would be reason enough to subject all drivers to random drug testing.

Moreover, such a policy would also address one of the most insidious and intractable problems facing society at large: the demand for illicit drugs. Experts in public health and law enforcement consistently emphasize the

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