

which we have followed in this State, calls for a continuing expansion and strengthening of laws and ordinances governing the use and handling of motor vehicles. It stresses the construction of more and better highways, with increased emphasis on good engineering and other safety factors in road construction. It points up sharply the need for more education in the traffic safety fields. The populace should be kept constantly aware of the great perils involved in highway travel. All persons given permits to drive should know how to handle the powerful machine they operate, and any person giving evidence that he has not this knowledge, or is not using it properly, should be deprived of the privilege to drive.

The action program calls for a tightening of law enforcement, with prompt and severe justice being meted out to all persons who threaten their own lives and the lives of others in the mishandling of motor vehicles. It advocates plugging any gaps that may exist in proper motor vehicle administration and police traffic supervision.

With all this, to be effective it is essential that any program, state or local, have full support of its citizenry. Here is where we, in positions of official responsibility for highway safety, call upon the Safety First Club of Maryland, and the many other organizations like it in Maryland, for help, in the heavy task we have to perform. It is extremely important, let me repeat, that the State or the local government have organized an effective citizen support for their traffic safety program. And there is no better way—perhaps no other way—for them to receive this support save through organizations such as this. You, more than anyone else, can influence the individual. And let me say that it is the individual himself who bears the ultimate responsibility for the safety, or the lack thereof, of motor vehicular travel.

Yes, we need better highways. We need stepped up law enforcement. We need improved driver education. We need seat belts and we need mechanical improvements for automobiles. But somehow or other we must find a way to reach the careless driver, to impress upon him the error of his ways and if necessary to remove him from a position in which he can menace all those about him. This undoubtedly is what the legislator from Virginia had in mind when he spoke of jackasses, nincompoops, drunks and fools. We don't have to be drunks, of course, but at one time or another most of us are foolish and may act like jackasses and nincompoops. The important thing is that we not act—and not be allowed to act—like fools and jackasses and nincompoops while we are behind the wheel of an automobile.

Your State government recognizes that traffic safety is one of its