

The background of the slide is a stylized American flag. The top portion is a dark blue field with several white, five-pointed stars. The bottom portion features the red and white stripes of the flag, with the red stripe visible in the bottom right corner. A white horizontal band is centered across the image, containing the text.

***Safer Environments Now,  
Brighter Futures Later***

*Kyle B. Ali- United States Youth Ambassador*

*NCSL 2007 Annual Meeting*

# Who Am I And Who Do I Represent?

- I may be a “young adult” – but, please note, my brain is also still developing
- I represent teens and young adults who face risks every day – and sometimes the choices made in response to these risks are not always the best choices
- I was selected to speak to you today because of my experience with BACCHUS Network, NOYS, and the United Nations Global Youth Assembly

# United States Youth Ambassador

- Actively participate in the exchange of intellectual tools, materials and resources geared towards ensuring safer roads at home and abroad.
- As a vocal advocate, foster a culture of critical discourse amongst peers, policy makers, and the general public about domestic and global road safety issues.
- Bring about awareness and proactive change through working relationships with the federal and local government, non for profit organizations and members of the global community.

# The Choices Teens Make

- Teens take many risks
  - Positive explorations
  - Negative tests of independence
- Teens need:
  - Safe environments
  - Appropriate boundaries
  - Caring adults
  - Clearly defined consequences

# Crashes are not Accidents

Inexperience, inattention, failure to use seat belts and alcohol use are the major contributors to teen traffic deaths.

# By the Numbers

- Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for young people 15 to 20 years old.
  - Globally 1,049 teens per day die on the roads, domestically on average 16 teens per day.
  - In the US in 2005, 7,460 15 to 20-year-old drivers and passengers were killed and an additional 281,000 were injured.
  - Persons 16-20 years old have the highest traffic fatality and injury rates per 100,000 population.
  - Two thirds of young passengers killed in traffic crashes were driven by another teen.

# Graduated Driver Licensing

- **Programs are proven to work:** evaluations of GDL laws show a 20 to 50 percent reductions in crashes of young novice drivers
- What happens when young drivers are faced with different choices such as restrictions from carrying other teen passengers in their car?
  - driving themselves,
  - giving up the trip,
  - going with an older driver, or
  - ignoring the restriction

# Seat Belt Use

- In fatal motor crashes, 57% of teens are not wearing their seat belt.
- Why don't teens use seat belts?
  - Peer pressure
  - Adult role models
  - Distracted from habit
  - Too many passengers (friends “need” a ride)
  - Just don't think about consequences

# Limiting Access to Alcohol

- Among 15-20 year old drivers in fatal crashes in 2005, 29% of the drivers killed had been drinking.
- Why is it that alcohol is so easily accessible to underage youth?
  - Parents provide or don't restrict
  - Older siblings and friends provide access
  - Fake IDs easy for older teens to obtain
  - Adults (and teens) don't know about new research about possible negative affects on brain development
  - Adults mistakenly believe if allowed in their home it is controlled and "OK"

# Young Motorcyclists

- Least likely to wear a helmet:
  - 326 young motorcycle riders killed and 9,000 injured in 2005
- Most likely to show off
- Like any other risky choice – just don't consider negative consequences

# What About Technology?

- Should technology be developed to address poor choices made by teens?
- Can technology alone replace poor choices?

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