

Thank you, Terry, and thanks to Regions Hospital for allowing us to use their facility to make this announcement today.

It is appropriate, yet ironic, that we are at a hospital to make this announcement. Because, what I am going to talk about today will hopefully hurt your business.

We are here today to announce a new legislative initiative for Minnesota.

An initiative that will save lives, reduce injuries, and save on health care costs.

Today I am announcing that I have decided to support allowing law enforcement officers to make traffic stops if people are not buckled-up.

I did not come to this decision lightly.

As you know, I strongly believe in personal responsibility, and tend to discourage government involvement in personal decisions.

But when you think about it wearing a seat belt is more than a personal decision, it is also a public safety decision.

In addition, driving a vehicle on our public roadways is not a right, it is a privilege.

And that brings to mind another Ventura principle: with the privilege comes responsibility.

And too many people are not taking seriously their responsibility to buckle-up.

Using seat belts should be a no-brainer. Get in the car, check your mirrors, fasten your seat belt and then turn the key.

For a lot of reasons the wearing of a seat belt should not be optional.

The most important reason is to prevent tragedy and loss of life.

But another reason is that increase seat belt use will decrease the budget impact of health care costs both to individuals and the State of Minnesota.

As you know the budget that I proposed last month is fiscally prudent. I promised the people that I would do whatever I can to limit the cost of government and this legislative initiative is consistent with that promise.

Today, I am joined by Commissioners Weaver and Malcolm who will give their perspectives.



(Closing remarks)

I would like to recognize the two legislators who are carrying this bill in the House and Senate: Representative Harry Mares and senators Jon Hottinger and Leo Foley.

I would like to thank all of the organizations that have worked hard on this issue, many of which are represented here today.

Thank you also to the parents and families of those injured or killed in auto accidents that have the courage to speak-out on this issue.

Finally, I want to recognize all crash survivors who are sharing their personal stories and encouraging their communities to buckle-up.

We need your continued support and your voices to make this bill the law in Minnesota.

I'll open-up to any questions.