

Pursuit-related crashes, on average, kill three innocent bystanders every week.



Donna Deitz Paul Farris James Williford Reynaldo Herrera Angeles Ipiña Kristie Priano Tabatha Berg Steven Ehrensperger Laura Felder Brian DeWitt

PursuitSAFETY exists to support innocent victims and to reduce deaths and injuries as a result of unnecessary police pursuits and response calls.

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

We are writing to ask for your support. You have the ability to release existing FY15 funding to support law enforcement's testing of pursuit reduction technologies and to support FY16 funding, policies and legislation to end police pursuits for situations for other than apprehension of violent felons. We ask this on behalf of more than 55,000 people—many of them innocent bystanders—who have been injured or killed because they were at the wrong place at the wrong time.

We represent the growing number of families of innocent bystanders killed in high-speed police pursuits. We are members of PursuitSAFETY®, the only national non-profit organization dedicated to preventing innocent victim and police officer deaths by reducing unnecessary police pursuits for non-violent felonies such as misdemeanor traffic violations or property crimes such as theft.

We continue to research police pursuits and the numbers are staggering. Studies show that there are thousands occurring every year. Specifically:

- Crashes as a result of police chases and police response calls kill more than one person a day and one-third of the people killed are innocent bystanders.
- On average police chase crashes also kill one law enforcement officer every six weeks and injure many more annually.
- A national study by the Department of Justice indicated that nearly eighty-eight percent of all pursuits target drivers who pose no immediate threat to the public.

Simply stated, the pursuits themselves endanger, injure and kill innocent citizens and police officers.

To say this is not to exonerate fleeing drivers. However, a fleeing driver does not care about your family's safety. By necessity, the burden to protect innocent citizens falls directly on individual law enforcement agencies, which must devise safer practices, and Department of Justice that can exercise oversight.

PursuitSAFETY appreciates that stronger pursuit legislation, including significantly stiffer sentences for those caught fleeing, and more conservative police pursuit policies are critical.

Too often officers are injured or killed in pursuits while taking the actions they think are expected of them. They are in a tough position, having to make difficult decisions in the heat of the moment. The hoped-for outcome of any pursuit is an arrest with no one getting hurt. However, in many cases pursuing officers have no practical plan for reaching this outcome. Too many pursuits still result in collisions and there are simply an unacceptable number of tragic outcomes concluding with deaths and injuries of innocent bystanders and officers.

All those involved — the public, law enforcement, policymakers — need alternatives to pursuits. The best options today are stricter pursuit policies and the use of new pursuit reduction technologies.

PursuitSAFETY
Working for a safer way

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Bastian & Dini
Beverly Hills, CA

Contact PursuitSAFETY

P.O. Box 3128
Chico, CA 95927-3128
530-343-9754

www.pursuitsafety.org

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Instituting changes throughout the country is a painfully slow task. While working for these changes, PursuitSAFETY continues to support law enforcement by seeking funds so departments can test and adopt pursuit reduction technologies. We ask that you release already-existing funds through Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) and Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants and add "pursuit reduction technology" as an "acceptable use purpose area" for grant funding. We are confident that when law enforcement tries new technology they will pursue less, capture more, and save innocent lives in their communities.

PursuitSAFETY is working for A Safer Way®

Kindest regards,

Jonathan Farris, Chairman, PursuitSAFETY

Candy Priano, Founder & Executive Director, PursuitSAFETY

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