**2017 *Ride Sober or Get Pulled Over* Labor Day Motorcycle Safety SAMPLE Op-Ed**

Note: *Before filling in the names of the organization and organization spokesperson, you MUST contact them to obtain their permission to use their names in this press release, and you must get their approval for the language used in their quotes, and any changes or additions they may require. Only after this is done can you send out the op-ed.*

You finish your drink at the bar, and head to the bathroom to splash cool water on your face before you hop on your motorcycle and head home. Take a good look at that man in the mirror—are you really ready to hit the road after having a few drinks? Surely you can’t leave your bike at the bar, can you? Here are the consequences: drunk driving can cost you everything. Besides the nearly $10,000 in legal fees, lost wages, and insurance hikes, you could face serious injury or death. Now, take another look.

In 2015, there were 4,976 motorcyclists (4,684 riders and 292 passengers) killed in motor vehicle traffic crashes—an increase of more than 8 percent from the 4,586 motorcyclists killed in 2014. Even though motorcycles account for only about 3 percent of registered vehicles on the road, motorcyclists are dramatically overrepresented in fatal crashes—especially those involving alcohol.

This year, **[Local Law Enforcement Organization]** is partnering with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to stop drunk motorcyclists and help save lives. The high-visibility national enforcement campaign, Ride Sober or Get Pulled Over, runs from August 16 through September 4, 2017. During this period, local law enforcement will show zero tolerance for drunk riding. Increased state and national messages about the dangers of riding (and driving) impaired, coupled with enforcement and increased officers on the road, aim to drastically reduce drunk riding on our nation’s roadways.

Motorcyclists have a reputation for being tough guys and gals. But no one is tough enough to withstand the devastating effects of drunk driving. Are the riders in your group comfortable with drunk riding? If you choose to set the example, you could help save a life. If you know you have a night of drinking ahead of you, plan for a safe alternative ride home before you ever head out, and plan to have someone take you to get your bike in the morning. There are so many safe ways to get home; there is never an excuse for drinking and driving.

Tragically, impaired riding often peaks during holidays, and Labor Day is one of the most dangerous holiday periods. Motorcyclists head out on the roads, hoping for that one last long ride before cold temperatures set in. With increased traffic comes an increased chance for traffic crashes, and motorcycles are included in this statistic. Youth also plays a factor in deadly motorcycle crashes. In 2015, nearly half (44%) of drunk-driving motorcyclists were between the ages of 18 and 34.

This Labor Day, and every day, the decision to not drink and ride should be an easy one. If you drink and ride, you could kill yourself or someone else. And if law enforcement finds you riding drunk, you will be arrested. Do not make excuses—everyone knows it is against the law to drink and ride in every state and Washington, D.C. And remember that drinking alcohol lowers inhibitions, causing you to make bad decisions you would not otherwise make. In fact, motorcyclists have to use an entirely different set of skills than vehicle drivers do. For this reason, motorcyclists are equally—if not more so—at risk.

The Labor Day holiday should be a special time for friends and families to mark the end of summer. It should end with good memories, not be marked by tragedy. Impaired riding is 100-percent preventable. This Labor Day weekend, we’ll be working hard to spread the word about the dangers of drunk riding through education and increased enforcement. It’s time to end the deadly, criminal behavior of drunk riding.

The *Ride Sober or Get Pulled Over* national high-visibility enforcement campaign ends on September 4. However, law enforcement is committed to enforcing drunk-riding laws throughout the year. Drunk riding is never okay. If you’re planning to drink, plan ahead for a sober ride home or make a plan to store your bike securely. Even one drink can be one too many. There are numerous options to get you home safely, including public transportation, trusted friends or relatives, or using NHTSA’s SaferRide mobile app to call a taxi or friend, available at [www.nhtsa.gov/link/saferride](https://www.nhtsa.gov/link/saferride)/.

For more information about the Ride Sober or Get Pulled Over enforcement campaign, please contact **[Local Organization Representative]** at **[phone or e-mail]**,or visit [www.TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov](https://www.TrafficSafetyMarketing.gov).