Executive Order
WPC-36A
(Executive Order WPC-36 is amended as follows and shall be known as WPC-36 as Amended January 21, 1982.)

Establishing the Governor's Task Force on Traffic Safety.

WHEREAS, the State of Texas has established a statewide traffic safety program designed to reduce traffic accidents and the resulting deaths, injuries, and property damage; and

WHEREAS, in the first six months of 1981, 2,125 persons were killed in motor vehicle traffic accidents which is a 6.3% increase over the first six months of 1980; and

WHEREAS, 4,424 persons were killed in motor vehicle traffic accidents on Texas highways and streets in 1980—a record number of traffic fatalities for the fourth consecutive year; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, the State of Texas maintained over 267,000 miles of public highways; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, the total number of persons holding valid Texas driver's licenses exceeded 9.4 million and the total number of motor vehicles registered in Texas exceeded 10.8 million; and

WHEREAS, the two leading causes of traffic deaths are DWI-related accidents and excessive speed-related accidents; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, in addition to the deaths, thousands of persons were injured on Texas' highways in DWI-related accidents; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, 81,220 drivers suspected of DWI were administered breath tests and 85% were found to be above the legal point of intoxication; and

WHEREAS, in 1980, the Highway Patrol Department of Public Safety charged 40,273 motorists with DWI, and in the first six months of 1981, 21,905 motorists have been charged with DWI; and

WHEREAS, during the past five years, Texas' population increased 16%, licensed drivers increased 22%, registered motor vehicles increased 20%, total vehicle miles traveled increased 22%, fatal traffic accidents increased 30%, and the number of authorized highway patrol officers increased only 2%; and

WHEREAS, the current strength of the Highway Patrol Service of the Department of Public Safety provides only one officer, including supervisors, for every 133 miles of highway; and

WHEREAS, all Texans are deeply concerned over the increase in traffic fatalities and injuries (especially DWI-related), and the safety of all citizens traveling on Texas' highways is imperative.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, William P. Clements, Jr., Governor of Texas, under the authority vested in me do hereby create and establish the Governor's Task Force on Traffic Safety, hereinafter referred to as task force.

The task force shall consist of not more than 17 members appointed by the governor who shall serve for two-year terms and at the pleasure of the governor. The governor shall designate a chairman and vice-chairman from the membership who shall serve in those positions at the pleasure of the governor.

The task force is charged with the following responsibilities:

(a) examine in detail the scope of Texas' existing traffic safety programs and the allocation of current law enforcement manpower protecting Texas' motorists;

(b) examine in detail the current laws pertaining to the offense of DWI:

(1) need for more stringent and mandatory penalties/fines,

(2) need for improvement in existing laws;

(3) judicial discretion in sentencing, and

(4) pattern of filing public intoxication charges in lieu of DWI;