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Congress of the United States

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June 3, 1986

...e Honorable Elizabeth Hanford Dole
...cretary of Transportation
...ffice of the Secretary
...0 Seventh Street, SW
...shington, D.C. 20590

...ar Secretary Dole:

I write to you with the views of the citizens of New Hampshire ...remost in mind. While some states have seen fit to pass laws man...ting the use of seat belts, New Hampshire citizens have ...e it ...ear that they prefer this matter left to the discre... ...e indi...dual. My hope is that the Department of Transport...ion would re...rain from using the threat of withholding federal highway money to ...orce states to enact mandatory seat belt laws.

As you know, the Department of Transportation has used this ...ethod in past years to coerce states to comply with the National ...inimum Drinking Age, and the 55 mile-per-hour speed limit. I would ...e interested to know if your agency has any plans to use the same ...eans to force states to enact legislation mandating the use of seat ...elts by motorists. Although the 55 mile-per-hour speed limit and the ...ational Minimum Drinking Age have merit, I believe the means by which ...tates have been forced to implement them can be construed as an ...nfringement upon states' rights. Further, I feel this is a classic ...xample of why it is bad policy to allow the federal government to ...ttach "strings" to federal money that is allocated to states. For ...hese reasons, I would urge you to exercise restraint with respect to ...sing the same method to force states to implement mandatory seat belt ...egislation.

Although I feel seat belts are desirable from a safety stand...oint, New Hampshire residents have made it clear that they feel the ...se of seat belts should be a matter of individual choice. I hope ...hat you will take their views into account when considering whether ...o take any action on this issue.

Sincerely,

Judd Gregg
Member of Congress

JG:rc