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SUMMARY

R46644

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Jacob R. Straus

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Commemorative Legislation in Congress: Trends and Observations, 93rd Through 115th Congresses

In 1783, the Continental Congress authorized the nation's first commemoration, an equestrian statue to George Washington. Since that time, Congress has used commemoratives to honor a myriad of people, groups, and events that it deemed important to American collective memory. Today, Members of Congress introduce, and the House and Senate consider, six primary types of commemorative legislation. These measures

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R46644>



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Commemorative Days, Weeks, and Months: Background and Current Practice

Updated June 27, 2019

<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R44431>

In 1783, the Continental Congress authorized the nation's first commemoration, an equestrian statue to George Washington. Since that time, Congress has used commemoratives to honor a myriad of people, groups, and events that it deemed important to American collective memory. Today, Members of Congress introduce, and the House and Senate consider, six primary types of commemorative legislation



1847
First U.S. Postage Stamps
5¢ Franklin; 10¢ Washington

These measures:

- name federal facilities, including post offices, federal buildings, courthouses, and Veterans Affairs facilities and hospitals;
- direct the United States Postal Service (USPS) to issue commemorative and semipostal stamps;
- instruct the U.S. Mint to issue commemorative coins;
- award Congressional Gold Medals;
- authorize and recognize national memorials in the District of Columbia and around the country; and
- create permanent commemorative observances by authorizing federal holidays and patriotic and national observances, and create temporary observances through the adoption of House and Senate resolutions or concurrent resolutions.




Women's Suffrage
Centennial Silver Dollar



\$5 Gold Coin



\$5 Silver Coin
Naismith Memorial
Basketball Hall of Fame



Typically, each Congress, hundreds of legislative measures are introduced to recognize, support, honor, or acknowledge certain days, weeks, and months. Some scholars have observed that commemorative legislation has universal and patriotic appeal and also provides an opportunity to connect directly with constituents, which can help fulfill representational responsibilities to Members' districts or states.

Often used to commemorate an individual, group, or event, these measures can be divided into three categories: (1) federal holidays; (2) patriotic and national observances; and (3) recognition of a specific day, week, or month that commemorates a specific individual, group, or event. To create either a federal holiday or a patriotic or national observance, a law is required. Action to recognize, support, honor, or acknowledge certain days, weeks, and months, however, requires only a simple resolution agreed to by the House or Senate, or a concurrent resolution agreed to by both chambers.


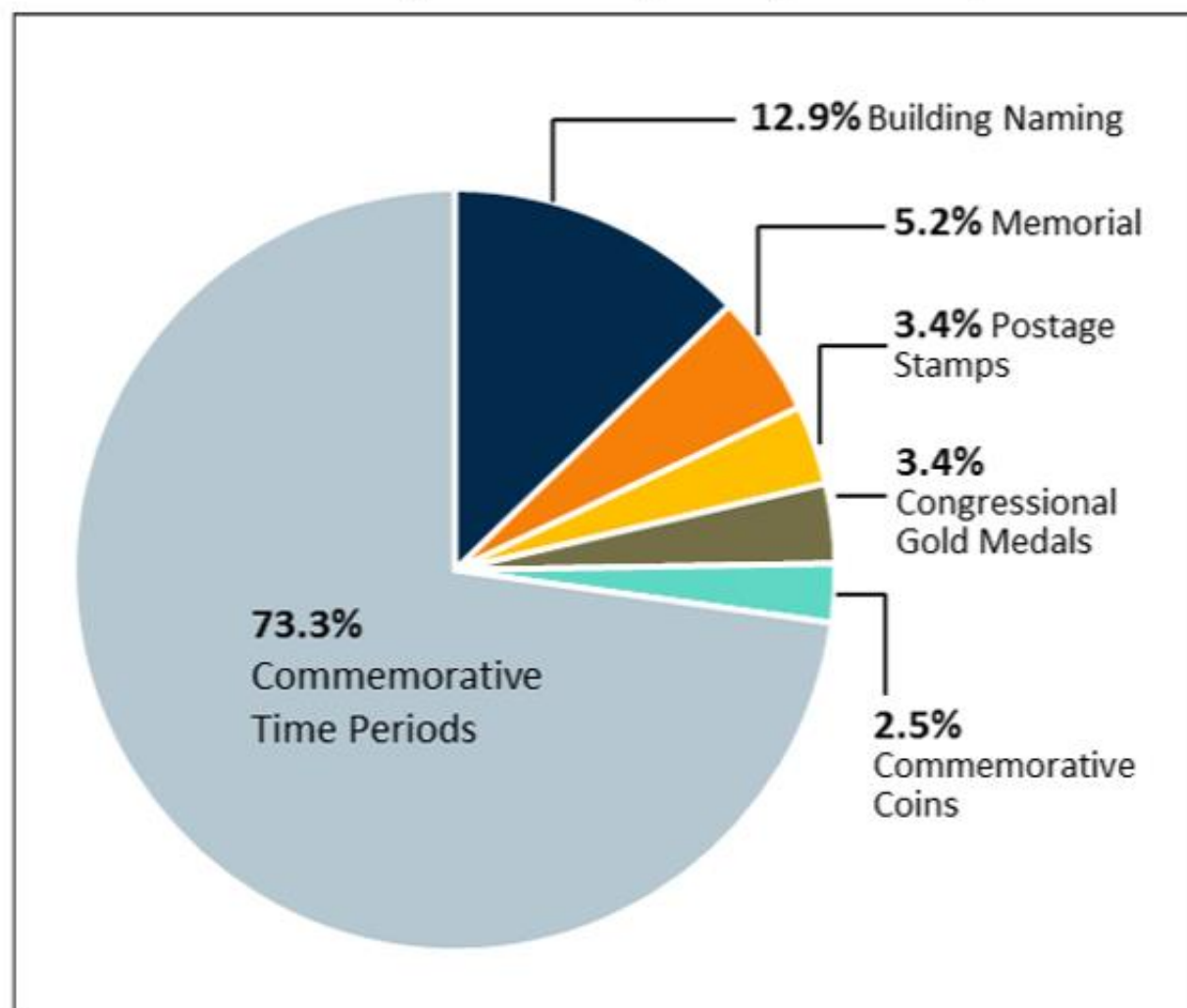


Figure 3. Commemorative Legislation Introduced by Type
93rd through 115th Congresses (1973-2018)



Source: Bush School of Government & Public Service and CRS data analysis of Congress.gov data on commemorative legislation.

Figure 1. Congress.gov Search Terms for Commemorative Legislation

Commemorative Type	Congress.gov Search Terms	Notes
Naming Federal Buildings	"designate the facility," "designate the," and "name the"	Excluded dams, highways, bridges, and other structures
Postage Stamps	"postage stamp" and "semipostal"	Excluded post office operations, cost, revenue, and post office namings
Commemorative Coins	"commemorative coin"	
Congressional Gold Medals	"congressional gold medal"	
Memorials and Commemorative Works	"monument" and "memorial"	Excluded national monuments under the Antiquities Act of 1906, and artwork in the U.S. Capitol
Commemorative Observances		
Federal Holiday	"federal holiday"	
Patriotic and National Observances	"Title 36" "amend*" and "36 U.S.C."	
Other Time Periods	"day," "week," "month," and "anniversary"	



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[Glaucoma Awareness Month - National Eye Institute](#)

www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/outreach-campaigns-and-resources/glaucoma-resources/glaucoma-awareness-month

January is **Glaucoma Awareness Month**. **Glaucoma** is a leading cause of vision loss and blindness in the United States. **Glaucoma** has no early symptoms — ..

[January is National Thyroid Awareness Month | California ...](#)

www.ihs.gov/california/index.cfm/news-events/directors-messages/january-is-national-thyroid-awareness-month/

January is **National Thyroid Awareness Month** Margo Kerrigan, M.P.H, Area Director **Indian Health Service** California Area Office .



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February: African American History Month

Authority: Executive Order 11478

<https://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances>

In 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson instituted the first week-long celebration to raise awareness of African Americans' contributions to history. 50 years later, the week became a month, and today February is celebrated as African American History Month. The month of February was chosen because it celebrates the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, both of whom dramatically affected the lives of African Americans. Frederick Douglass (1817-1895) was a writer, lecturer, editor, and civil rights activist who escaped slavery at age 21 and went on to campaign for the abolition of slavery, establish a newspaper, and hold the office of Minister to Haiti. He was a major voice in the anti-slavery/civil rights movement of his time. Abraham Lincoln (born February 12, 1809), as the sixteenth president of the United States, issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, thereby declaring that all slaves within the Confederacy would be permanently free. Each year, the Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASAALH) founded by Dr. Woodson, sets the theme for the month.



February

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NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION MONTH



<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/prevention/>



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March: National Women's History Month

Authority: *Public Law 103-22, 107 Stat. 58 and Executive Order 11375*

<https://www.archives.gov/eeo/special-observances>

National Women's History Month was established by presidential proclamation in order to draw attention to and improve the focus on women in historical studies. It began in New York City on March 8, 1857, when female textile workers marched in protest of unfair working conditions and unequal rights for women. It was one of the first organized strikes by working women, during which they called for a shorter work day and decent wages. Also on March 8, in 1908, women workers in the needle trades marched through New York City's Lower East Side to protest child labor, sweatshop working conditions, and demand women's suffrage. Beginning in 1910, March 8 became annually observed as International Women's Day. Women's History Week was instituted in 1978 in an effort to begin adding women's history into educational curricula. In 1987, the National Women's History Project successfully petitioned Congress to include all of March as a celebration of the economic, political and social contributions of women.



OKLAHOMA
State Department
of Health

<https://oklahoma.gov/health/chronic-disease-prevention/national-nutrition-month-resources.html>

National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month!

National Nutrition Month® is an annual nutrition education and information campaign created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The campaign, celebrated each year during the month of March, focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.

<https://youtu.be/m7boRWozPOY>



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[Occupational Therapy Month - beavertonoregon.gov](http://beavertonoregon.gov)
www.beavertonoregon.gov/DocumentCenter/View/34396/2022-Proclamation-Occupational-Therapy-Month

WHEREAS, The
American **Occupational Therapy** Association has
declared the **month** of April 2022, to be known
as **Occupational Therapy Month**, and . WHEREAS ...

[BAMC celebrates National Occupational Therapy Month ...](#)

www.army.mil/article/36725/bamc_celebrates_national_occupational_therapy_month

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas -- To commemorate April
as National **Occupational Therapy**
Month, **occupational therapy** practitioners at Brooke
Army Medical ...

[April is Stress Awareness Month | Plumsted NJ](#)
www.plumsted.org/home/news/april-stress-awareness-month

Stress Awareness Month has been recognized every
April since 1992, but this year it seems particularly
important.



FEDERAL REGISTER

The Daily Journal of the United States Government



PD Presidential Document

Month of the Military Child, 2022

A Presidential Document by the Executive Office of the President on 04/05/2022



<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/04/05/2022-07261/month-of-the-military-child-2022>

PUBLISHED DOCUMENT

Proclamation 10357 of March 31, 2022

Month of the Military Child, 2022

A Proclamation

Each April, the Month of the Military Child provides a chance for us to recognize and thank the children of our service members and veterans. I have always believed that America has a sacred obligation to prepare our troops when we send them into harm's way and to support them and their families both while they are deployed and after they return home. The First Lady and I recognize that

DOCUMENT DETAILS

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[PDF](#)

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[04/05/2022](#)

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[Executive Office of the President](#)

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Presidential Document



May: Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

Authority: Executive Order 13339

<https://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances>

The roots of Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month can be traced back to 1976, when Jeanie Jew, President of the Organization of Chinese American Women, contacted government officials in response to the lack of Asian Pacific representation in the U.S. bicentennial celebrations that same year. The observance began in 1979 as Asian Heritage Week, established by congressional proclamation. In May 1990, the holiday was expanded further when President George Bush signed a proclamation making it month-long for that year. On October 23, 1992, Bush signed legislation designating May of every year Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. The month of May was chosen to commemorate two significant events in history: the immigration of the first Japanese immigrants to the United States on May 7, 1843, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869 (Golden Spike Day). The diversity and common experiences of the many ethnic groups are celebrated during Asian Pacific American Heritage Month with numerous community festivals as well as government-sponsored activities.

National Inventors Month celebrates human ingenuity and honors innovation and creativity. This May, take the opportunity to ignite an interest in learning and preserving intellectual property history.

<https://www.uspto.gov/learning-and-resources/inventors-and-entrepreneurs/do-you-know-uspto-celebrate-national-inventors>

May is American Wetlands Month



American Wetlands Month is a time when the EPA and our partner federal, state, tribal, local, non-profit and private sector organizations celebrate the vital importance of wetlands to our Nation's ecological, economic, and social health. Wetlands help improve water quality and supply, reduce flooding and provide critical habitat for plants, fish and wildlife.

<https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/may-american-wetlands-month>

<https://acl.gov/oam/history>



OAM Home

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[Go to ACL.gov >](#)

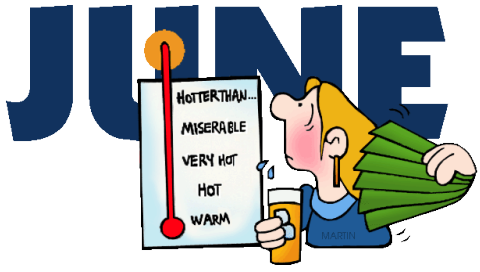
[Home](#) / [History of Older Americans Month](#)

History of Older Americans Month

<https://www.hhs.gov/blog/2021/05/31/celebrating-older-americans-month-by-empowering-our-older-adults.html>

OAM History

When Older Americans Month was established in 1963, only 17 million living Americans had reached their 65th birthday. About a third of older Americans lived in poverty and there were few programs to meet their needs. Interest in older Americans and their concerns was growing. A meeting in April 1963 between President John F. Kennedy and members of the National Council of Senior Citizens led to designating May as "Senior Citizens Month," the prelude to "Older Americans Month."



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June: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month

Authority: *Proclamation 8387*

In June of 1969, patrons and supporters of the Stonewall Inn in New York City staged an uprising to resist the police harassment and persecution to which LGBT Americans were commonly subjected. This uprising marks the beginning of a movement to outlaw discriminatory laws and practices against LGBT Americans. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month commemorates the events of June 1969 and works to achieve equal justice and equal opportunity for LGBT Americans. In 1998, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13087 expanding equal opportunity employment in the Federal government by prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation. On June 2, 2000, President Clinton issued Proclamation No. 7316 for Gay and Lesbian Pride Month. On June 1, 2009, President Obama issued Proclamation No. 8387 for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month. In this proclamation the President pointed to the contributions made by LGBT Americans both in promoting equal rights to all regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity and in broader initiatives such as the response to the global HIV pandemic. The President ended the proclamation by calling upon the people of the United States to "turn back discrimination and prejudice everywhere it exists."

<https://www.loc.gov/lgbt-pride-month/about/>

<https://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances>



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July Is Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month

www.niams.nih.gov/community-outreach-initiative/july

July Is Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month. What should I know about **juvenile arthritis**? **Arthritis** is a condition that can cause pain in your joints ...

July is Recreation and Parks Month! | MD-Westminster, MD ...

www.westminstermd.gov/368/July-is-Recreation-and-Parks-Month

Through efforts by NRPA, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an official resolution for Park and Recreation **Month** in 2009. Park and recreation ..



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August National Health Observances: Immunization, Children

...

[health.gov/news/202007/august-national-health-observances-immunization-childrens-eye-health-and-safety-and-breastfeeding](https://www.health.gov/news/202007/august-national-health-observances-immunization-childrens-eye-health-and-safety-and-breastfeeding)

Help spread the word about National Immunization Awareness **Month**, Children's Eye **Health** and Safety **Month**, and National Breastfeeding **Month** in **August** ..

National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) is an annual observance held in August to highlight the importance of vaccination for people of all ages. **Use these resources to assist you in communicating to healthcare professionals, parents, and patients about immunization during August and throughout the year.**



https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/events/niam/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fvaccines%2Fevents%2Fniam.html



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[September is National Preparedness Month | FEMA.gov](https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20210901/september-national-preparedness-month)
www.fema.gov/press-release/20210901/september-national-preparedness-month

National **Preparedness Month** is observed each September to raise awareness about steps individuals, families and communities can take to be ready for ...

September: National Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15–October 15)

Authority: Executive Order 13230

<https://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances>

National Hispanic Heritage Month honors the culture, heritage, and contributions of Hispanic Americans each year. The event began in 1968 when Congress deemed the week, including September 15 and 16, National Hispanic Heritage Week to celebrate the contributions and achievements of the diverse cultures within the Hispanic community. The dates were chosen to commemorate two key historic events: Independence Day, honoring the formal signing of the Act of Independence for Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (September 15, 1821), and Mexico's Independence Day, which denotes the beginning of the struggle against Spanish control (September 16, 1810). It was not until 1988 that the event was expanded to month-long period, which includes El Dia de la Raza on October 12, celebrating the influences of the people who came after Christopher Columbus and the multicultural, multiethnic society that evolved as a result; Chile's Independence Day on September 18 (El Dieciocho); and Belize's Independence Day on September 21. Each year a different theme for the month is selected and a poster is created to reflect that theme.



October: National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Authority: Executive Order 13187

<https://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances>

Congress, with the aim of helping disabled veterans, designated the first week of October as National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week in 1945. Seventeen years later, the word "physically" was removed from the phrase in order to recognize the needs and contributions of individuals with all types of disabilities. In the 1970s, a shift in disability public policy led to further amendments. For the first time, it was viewed as discriminatory to exclude or segregate people because of a disability, and activists were fighting strongly for legal revisions. As a result, the U.S. saw changes such as the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 and the designation, by presidential proclamation, of a full month to increase public awareness of those with disabilities and appreciate the capabilities of the 30 million people in the U.S. of working-age who are disabled. Various programs throughout the month headed by The Office of Disability Employment Policy emphasize specific employment barriers that still need to be addressed and eliminated.

NEWS

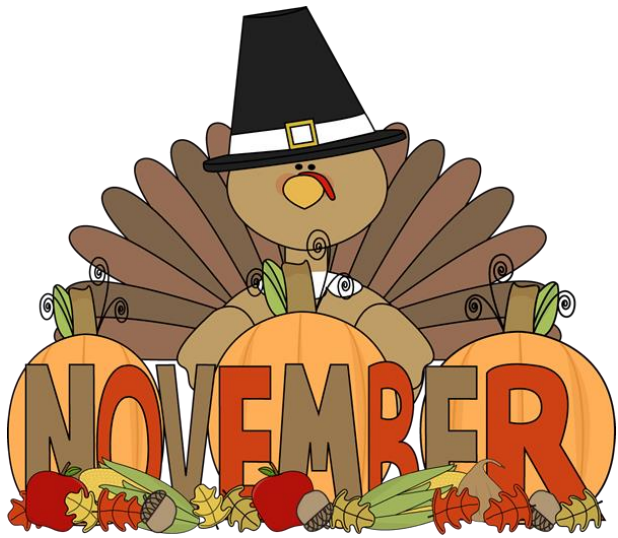
7 Ways to Celebrate National Seafood Month

October 13, 2021

When it comes to sustainable seafood, we have a lot to celebrate in the United States.

Temperatures are cooling, leaves are changing colors, and the smell of pumpkin spice fills the air—all signs of fall in the United States! This time of year is meaningful for many reasons. At NOAA Fisheries, it's a time to celebrate seafood because October is National Seafood Month. Read on for ways you and your family can savor the flavors—and health benefits—of seafood.





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November: National American Indian/Alaska Native Heritage Month

Authority: *Presidential Proclamation and Executive Order 13270*

<https://www.archives.gov/eo/special-observances>

In 1976, Congress designated a week of October to celebrate Native American Awareness Week. The week served as recognition for the great influence American Indians have had upon the U.S. Yearly legislation was enacted to continue the tradition until August of 1990, when President Bush approved the designation of November as National American Indian Heritage Month. Each year a similar proclamation is issued. President Clinton noted in 1996, "Throughout our history, American Indian and Alaska Native peoples have been an integral part of the American character. Against all odds, America's first peoples have endured, and they remain a vital cultural, political, social, and moral presence." November is an appropriate month for the celebration because it is traditionally a time when many American Indians hold fall harvest and world-renewal ceremonies, powwows, dances, and various feasts. The holiday recognizes hundreds of different tribes and approximately 250 languages, and celebrates the history, tradition, and values of American Indians. National American Indian Heritage Month serves as a reminder of the positive effect native peoples have had on the cultural development and growth of the U.S., as well as the struggles and challenges they have faced.

November National Health Observances: Diabetes, Lung Cancer, and More

🕒 Posted on October 25, 2021 by ODPHP

Each month we feature select National Health Observances (NHOs) to highlight important health issues that affect Americans every day. In November we're raising awareness about diabetes, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and antibiotic resistance.



<https://health.gov/news/202110/november-national-health-observances-diabetes-lung-cancer-and-more>



**National Health
Observances**





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Category

[Criminal Justice \(1\)](#)

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[Military Families \(1\)](#)

Socializing Safely This Season: National Impaired Driving Prevention Month

Date: December, 20, 2021 | Categories: [Substance Use](#), [Prevention](#)

By: [CAPT Jeffrey A. Coady, Psy.D., ABPP, Acting Director of SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Prevention and SAMHSA Region 5 Administrator](#)

December. As individuals, we look forward to getting together with friends and family to celebrate the holidays. It's also a time when prevention can play an especially important role. December is a deadly month for impaired driving.

https://www.census.gov/newsroom/facts-for-features.html



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Facts for Features

Profile America Facts for Features consist of collections of statistics from the Census Bureau's demographic and economic subject areas pertaining to holidays, anniversaries, observances or topics in the news. The data are intended to assist media in writing feature stories on these commemorations, which range from Hispanic Heritage Month to the Holiday Season.

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