

We think that the only permanent solution to the problem would be to remove from the highways the drivers who cause an excessive number of accidents, injuries, and financial losses.

But as yet the American public has shown little willingness to do so. As a nation we tolerate a fantastic degree of irresponsibility on our highways. People are allowed to kill, maim and inflict economic damages on other people with relative impunity so long as they do it with an automobile.

I think that the committee knows that in 1966 this Nation's increasingly destructive use of the highways killed 53,000 human beings, injured nearly 2 million, and damaged 22 million vehicles. Very few of the drivers responsible for the appalling destruction were removed from the roads or required to undergo remedial training.

One can go into any State in the Union today and find on the highways people who have repeatedly demonstrated their unfitness to drive. Yet they retain their driver's licenses or drive without them because our automobile-oriented society refuses to hold to a reasonable standard of performance.

It is against this backdrop that the insurance industry must deal with such politically sensitive issues as premium surcharges, underwriting standards, rate classifications, cancellations, and nonrenewal of policies.

These, as you know, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, are many of the complaints that are current today in this area.

We trust that these issues will be considered in the light of the conflicting demands we are trying to satisfy.

This does not mean that we are satisfied with the status quo or that we would defend the actions of all companies in our struggle to cope with the automobile problem.

On the contrary, our member companies and other responsible segments of the industry have been working on several fronts to overcome the shortcomings of our system and to clear up abuses on the part of our companies.

Now if I may, I will list quickly some the contributions our industry has made in the automobile field. The industry has made available plans in every State to assist motorists who need automobile liability insurance and who have difficulty in obtaining it.

Our organization advocates expanded use of these plans and stands ready to cooperate with the other segment of the industry in attaining this objective.

Over the years, our companies also have participated in expanding the auto liability policy from a rather limited contract into a package of coverages that provide broad protection to travelers on the highways.

This broadening of protection has been brought about by extending the policy to cover drivers other than the policyholder, vehicles other than the car he owns and hazards other than the ones originally insured.

One example is the widely sold auto medical payment coverage.

Another is the uninsured motorist coverage which protects policyholders and their families if they are injured by an uninsured driver.

This coverage, available in every State, has now become the source of protection against insolvencies as well. Twenty-six States now