

Letter: Another Victim from a Drunk Driving Illegal Alien in Sanctuary State California

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My name is Lori Martin from Tracy, California, and my life has been a wild ride. When I was a teenager in the early 1990's everything was great. I was active on two high school sport teams, had wonderful grades and had friends everywhere.

I was eager to get my drivers license when I turned 16 in September of 1991. I had so much to accomplish in life and I thought being able to drive was just the start. On April 10, 1992 everything changed: I was hit head-on by a drunken driver.

It took about 40 minutes for rescuers, using the Jaws of Life, to free me from my crushed car. I was flown by helicopter to St. Joseph's Medical Center in Stockton for immediate care.

The collision gave me a coma, brain injuries, several damaged and broken bones, numerous cuts and bruises, multiple fractures, torn tendons, a lacerated liver, eight cracked ribs, collapsed left lung and paralysis. I was so lively at school and my future was bright but my positive life practically ended.

What about the drunken driver? Two weeks after the crash, the male driver of the vehicle that hit me made a court appearance. The man could not speak English. The judge told him to return in two weeks with a Spanish translator. He never did.

The police found out his blood level at the crash was .24, three times the legal limit of .08. He was also unlicensed and an illegal alien. I can almost guarantee you that he would not have escaped punishment so easily if he was a legal American.

After 33 days of intensive care and surgeries at the hospital, an ambulance drove me to Golden State Rehabilitation Hospital in San Ramon. After four months there, I broke from my coma. My days and nights were then filled with physical, occupational and speech therapy.

I had to relearn everything, like sitting and standing. My speech was and is difficult to understand at times. People that also noticed I read lips to understand what was said or they had to write it down.

Doctors figured the high fever resulting from the crash killed and injured some hearing cells. Others were not harmed. I can hear sounds, but my injured brain is unable to comprehend this difference between the sounds. This affects me much daily.

At the end of November 1992, I went home. I was then transported two to three times a week to a clinic in San Jose for the same therapies. On the weekdays I did not go, a physical therapist came to my home.

I also did schooling at home. I had to earn credits to graduate from high school, so a teacher educated me at my home. Remember, I was only 16 when I was in the crash.

My location of therapy changed to the hospital in Tracy in the beginning of October 1993. I was determined to walk again. With all of my therapy and strong will, I walked to my therapy sessions.

Therapy became history and I became a high school graduate at the end of April 1994. I went to college for a couple of years and had jobs. I am thankful my parents and friends drive me to places.

In 2006, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) contacted me. They wanted to know if I would speak at Every 15 Minutes retreats teaching teenagers to not drink and drive. I gladly gave a speech in April that year. My speeches continued for years at schools and clubs in five cities.

I began sending letters to the editor to newspapers for holidays and special events (like Super Bowl) in 2007 encouraging adults to not drive drunk. Eventually, my letters are printed in almost every California county.

The CHP appreciated my work. Former Tracy CHP Commander Mary Rennie gave me the CHP Commander's Award in 2009 for my work in educating people to stay sober when driving.

In 2014, former Tracy CHP Commander Jeff James and former CHP Deputy Commissioner Ramona Prieto gave me Certificates of Community Service for my continuous work. Former CHP Commissioner Joe Farrow also gave me the highest honor granted by the CHP in Sacramento: The Commissioner's Medal of Distinction.

The certificates and medal were given 10+ years ago and I hold them with much pride. I never stopped giving speeches and writing. Keeping drunken drivers off the roads and illegal aliens out of California is my hope for the future.

