

For Immediate Release



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New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police Announces Statewide John Elliott Memorial Enforcement Initiative on July 22

TRENTON – July xx, 2026 – The New Jersey State Association of Chiefs of Police (NJSACOP) today announced the statewide John Elliott Memorial Enforcement Initiative, an all-day impaired driving enforcement campaign that will take place on Wednesday, July 22.

Law enforcement agencies throughout New Jersey will conduct highly visible DWI enforcement and public education efforts in memory of U.S. Navy Ensign John R. Elliott, whose tragic death led to the enactment of New Jersey's landmark John's Law.

Ensign Elliott, a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and resident of Egg Harbor Township, was killed on July 22, 2000, while driving home to celebrate his mother's birthday. He had graduated just two months earlier and was preparing to begin Naval Flight School. His vehicle was struck by a drunk driver who had been arrested for driving while intoxicated earlier that same evening, but was released to a friend and allowed to resume driving while still impaired.

Elliott's death prompted the enactment of John's Law, which requires the impoundment of a vehicle for 12 hours following a DWI arrest, helping ensure that impaired drivers cannot immediately return to the road and endanger others.

As part of this initiative, police departments across New Jersey will deploy additional officers dedicated to impaired driving enforcement. Motorists who choose to drive under the influence should expect increased patrols, sobriety checkpoints where appropriate, and swift enforcement action throughout the day and evening.

“This initiative honors the life of Ensign John Elliott in the most meaningful way possible—by taking impaired drivers off our roads before they have the opportunity to destroy another family,” said Collingswood Police Chief Kevin Carey, NJSACOP President. “Our message is simple: if you choose to drive impaired, you should expect to encounter law enforcement. The safest decision is also the easiest one—plan ahead, designate a sober driver, or find another way home.”

The initiative also highlights the mission of the HERO Campaign for Designated Drivers, which was founded by the Elliott family following John's death to encourage motorists to always use a safe, sober ride home. Together, John's Law, the HERO Campaign, and proactive enforcement have become cornerstones of New Jersey's fight against impaired driving.

“Every impaired driving crash is preventable, yet too many families continue to experience unimaginable loss because someone made the decision to get behind the wheel after drinking or using drugs,” said Michael J. Rizol Jr., Director of the New Jersey Division of Highway Traffic Safety. “The John Elliott Memorial Enforcement Initiative sends a clear message that New Jersey remains committed to aggressive impaired driving enforcement. By combining education with highly visible enforcement, we are working to prevent tragedies before they occur and save lives.”

The John Elliott Memorial Enforcement Initiative is part of the statewide Goal Zero movement, which brings law enforcement agencies together throughout the year to address the behaviors most responsible for traffic fatalities and serious injuries. The July 22 initiative places a particular emphasis on impaired driving, one of the leading causes of preventable traffic deaths.

NJSACOP encourages everyone celebrating with family and friends this summer to plan for a sober ride before drinking. Whether using a designated driver, rideshare service, taxi, or public transportation, planning ahead can prevent a lifetime of regret.

“John Elliott's legacy has already saved countless lives through John's Law and the HERO Campaign,” Chief Carey said. “On July 22, we will honor that legacy by reminding every driver that impaired driving will not be tolerated in New Jersey. Together, through education, enforcement, and personal responsibility, we can continue moving toward our shared goal of zero traffic fatalities.”

*Photo Caption: Ensign John R. Elliott, (November 17, 1977 - July 22, 2000)
U.S. Naval Academy Class of 2000*

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