

A D D R E S S

**of Mark Venzke,
citizen of the City Of Gainesville, Florida,
to the Commissioners of the City Of Gainesville, Florida**

**during the early evening public comment period
at the regular meeting of the Gainesville City Commission**

**on Thursday, April 18, 2013
at about 6:15 p.m.**

concerning
effects of impaired driving

I am Mark Venzke of Gainesville.

Mister Chairman,

I and I am sure many others are disappointed that you have not yet publicized your addiction evaluation that your plea agreement stipulates that you must undergo. The results of that evaluation are obviously immaterial now in the runoff election that you lost, but they are material to whether you would get any help that that evaluation may reveal that you would need and that your plea agreement stipulates that you would need to get, to the public knowing the efficacy of our criminal justice system and, ultimately, to the public knowing the safety of our roads.

I continue to raise the issue of impaired driving not to be mean but to push for public safety. My intention is to motivate you and all other drivers who hear my address to drive responsibly.

After hearing my last, two addresses to this commission on the subject of impaired driving, an associate recently asked me if I had been personally touched by it. I told her, "No," but that I have been a low-key, person-to-person advocate for unimpaired driving since I viewed my first, dramatic public service announcement about impaired driving on television when I was a boy.

PRESENT EXHIBIT 1 – Chocolate Cab reference

As the former host of the world-famous Chocolate Cab here, in Gainesville, I had encouraged countless passengers—mostly University Of Florida students—to never drive while impaired. The home page of the Chocolate Cab Internet site (at www.ChocolateCab.weebly.com) to this day has five pieces dedicated to promoting responsible consumption of alcohol and unimpaired driving.

REMOVE EXHIBIT 1 – Chocolate Cab reference

As I stated in my last address to this commission, Mister Chairman, you could have drifted across the center line of the road in the early morning of March 21. From an examination of the photo images of your accident scene that have appeared in the media since my last address, you appear to me to have done just that. The trench in the ground marking the path of your car that lead to the downed road sign that your car hit are on the **left** side of the road.

Mister Chairman, this is Jacqui Saburido.

PRESENT EXHIBIT 2 – Jacqui Saburido flyer

She was twenty years old when her life changed dramatically. Here is a brief overview of her ordeal that caused her injuries and disfigurement:

At 4:00 a.m. on Sunday, September 19, 1999, five young people were in a car heading home from a birthday party in Austin, Texas. Natalia Bennet was driving. Jacqui Saburido was her front-seat passenger.

Reggie Stephey, eighteen at the time, was also heading home in his car. He had been drinking alcoholic beverages. Less than a mile from his home, **Reggie's car drifted across the center line and struck Natalia's car head on**. Natalia Bennett and Laura Guerrero died at the scene.

Jacqui suffered third-degree burns over 60 percent of her body after the car caught fire. She has undergone more than 100 surgeries since the accident.

Mister Chairman, this is the kind of injury that you could have caused.

Am I “down on” impaired driving and impaired drivers? You bet I am.

Mister Chairman, you and anyone who views or reads this address who uses licit substances, please, please, use them responsibly and, please, please, never use illicit substances or use licit substances illicitly.

REMOVE EXHIBIT 2 – Jacqui Saburido flyer

A safe, healthy, attractive, prosperous, sustainable and nurturing city is ours for the making!

I yield the remainder of my time.

564 words

3.40 minutes (00:03:24) at 166 words per minute