



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy, Kelly Cline Applaud Governor's Distracted Driving Bill

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY June 10, 2011

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Cline, Kennedy formed Families Against Texting While Driving to push issue forward

BUFFALO, N.Y. – Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, D-58th District, and Kelly Cline, a West Seneca mother and relentless safety advocate, commended Governor Andrew Cuomo for introducing a program bill on distracted driving. Cline also announced **Families Against Texting While Driving** – the advocacy group that she formed with Senator Kennedy earlier this year – will actively support the Governor's bill.

"Texting while driving has become an epidemic. Far too many families have suffered tragedies at the hands of distracted drivers yet the behind-the-wheel distractions continue – and past lawmakers have failed to act. New Yorkers cannot afford any more delay or inaction. We need to strengthen our state's flimsy distracted driving laws, and we need to do it quickly," Senator Kennedy said. "Kelly Cline and I formed Families Against Texting While Driving earlier this year to urge Albany to finally pass a texting ban, and we are making significant progress. We passed a bill through the Senate to crackdown on distracted driving in May, and now the Governor is introducing a bill that will make New York's roads safer.

“With the Governor’s support behind a specific bill, we are closer than ever to banning texting and other distractions behind the wheel. Stronger laws will ultimately advance our larger cause of ending this dangerous and deadly habit,” he added. “I applaud the Governor for his leadership and for authoring this bill, and I cannot thank Kelly Cline enough for her relentless advocacy against texting while driving. Kelly has been the driving force behind his issue, and she is a major reason we are this close to getting this texting ban passed.”

“I lost my son A.J. Larson to texting-while-driving. New York State needs to step up its efforts to prevent other families from enduring what we’ve gone through. It starts with a primary no-texting law – a tool for law enforcement to crackdown on texting-while-driving and make our roads safer for all New Yorkers,” Cline said. “The existing secondary law is simply not good enough. I’ve had so many people tell me that. Like me, they are so frustrated when they see people texting-while-driving – I hear lots of voices with the same concerns. We formed Families Against Texting While Driving to bring all of our separate voices together as one stronger, louder voice. It seems Albany is finally listening. We’re close to getting this done, but we’re not there yet. I ask all New Yorkers to call, write or email their state legislators and urge them to support the Governor’s bill. Thank you to Governor Cuomo for introducing this bill, and thank you to Senator Kennedy and his colleagues for helping me advance our cause.”

You can learn more about Families Against Texting While Driving at their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/FamiliesAgainstTextingWhileDriving. To become a member of the organization, send an email to FamiliesAgainstTWD@gmail.com. Since the group started in mid-April, about 1,000 New Yorkers have pledged their support.

Components of the Governor’s bill:

- Using a portable electronic device behind the wheel becomes a primary offense.
- If ticketed, three points are added on driver's license in addition to a \$150 fine.
- Distracted driving will be included as part of the defensive driving curriculum.