



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Senator Kennedy Announces Ban on Texting While Driving Approved in Senate, Assembly

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY June 14, 2011

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION, CELL PHONES**



Legislation now awaits Governor's signature, Kelly Cline cited as driving force behind legislation to crackdown on texting drivers

ALBANY, N.Y. – Senator Timothy M. Kennedy, D-58th District, announced the Senate and Assembly have approved legislation that strengthens state law against texting while driving ([S.5643](#)|[A.8106](#)). Once the Governor signs the bill, law enforcement will finally have the tools they need to begin cracking down on texting while driving.

The legislation, co-sponsored by Senator Kennedy, makes texting while driving a primary offense – giving police officers the authority to stop a texting driver as soon as he or she is observed texting behind the wheel. Current law had maintained texting while driving as a secondary offense.

“After our aggressive fight for stronger laws against distracted driving, the Governor’s signature is now all that’s needed to make texting while driving a primary offense,” Senator Kennedy said. “Distracted driving has forced far too many families to endure preventable tragedies. By cracking down on texting behind the wheel, we are taking a significant step toward safer roads across New York State. This bill sends a simple message to texting drivers: keep your eyes on the road and off your phone.”

After Kelly Cline lost her son in a tragic texting-while-driving accident in 2007, she made it her mission to end texting while driving. Cline has been actively working behind the scenes to push for action on distracted-driving legislation. She joined forces with Senator Kennedy earlier this year to bring supporters together as one strong voice under the [Families Against Texting While Driving](#) banner.

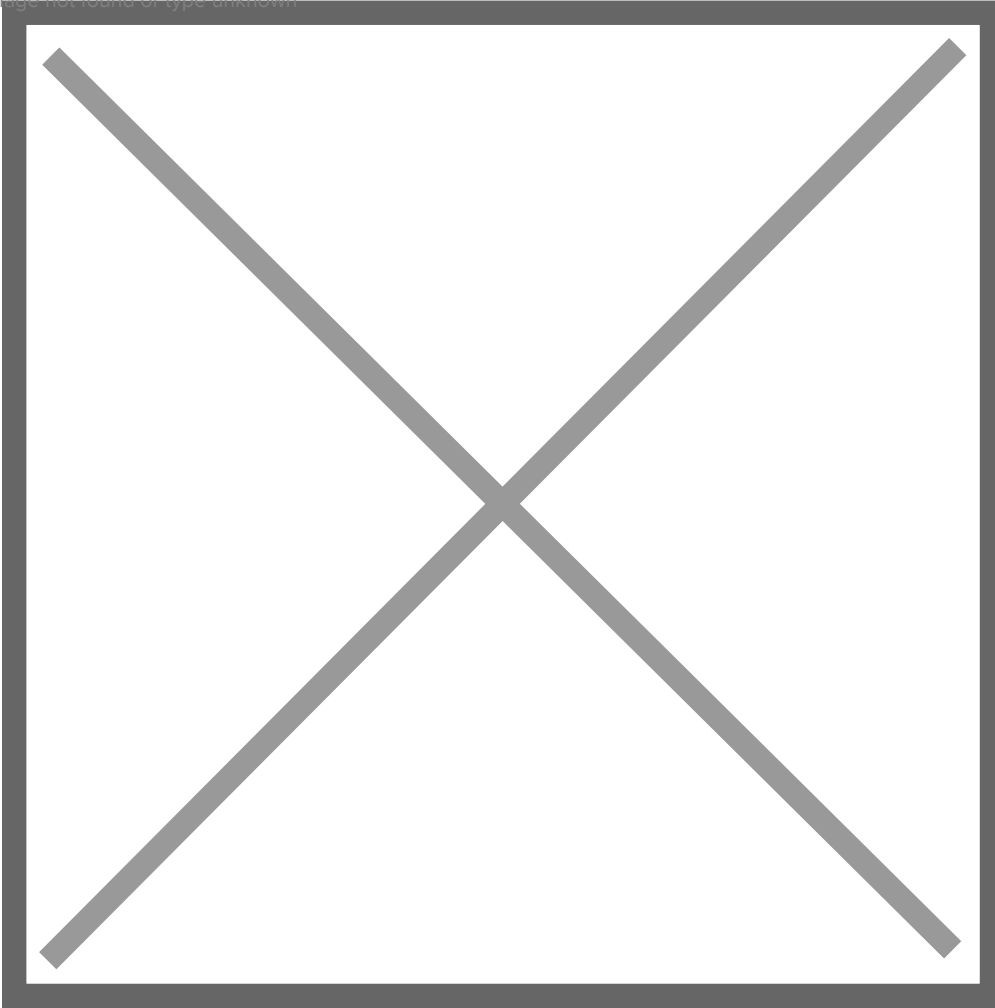
“It has been a three-and-a-half year fight to get to this point,” Cline said. “From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank Senator Tim Kennedy and his amazing staff. Tim promised me that he would make texting-while-driving a priority when he got to Albany, and he’s a man of his word – just look what we’ve accomplished! I thank Assemblyman Mark Schroeder and Assemblyman Felix Ortiz for all their efforts to get the no-texting bill passed back in 2009. Thank you to Senator Carl Marcellino and Assemblyman Harvey Weisenberg for spearheading our recent push for a primary no-texting law. And to all the supporters of Families Against Texting While Driving – we did it! Thank you all for your support! And lastly, to Governor Cuomo – sir, the ball’s in your court. Please sign this bill into law – you will save lives.”

“Kelly Cline has been a driving force behind the effort to end texting while driving,” Senator Kennedy said. “Without Kelly’s relentless advocacy, we not would be announcing Senate and Assembly passage of this legislation today. I thank Kelly Cline for being a close ally in this fight and my colleagues for helping advance our push for a tough texting ban on New York’s roads. I also thank Governor Cuomo for his leadership on this issue and for adding momentum to the effort to pass legislation that takes on the distracted-driving epidemic.”

Cline has been leading this fight for years. When Albany failed to deliver in the past, she worked with then-County Legislator Kennedy to pass a ban on texting while driving through the Erie County Legislature. Taking the fight back to Albany this year, Cline and Senator Kennedy have provided a critical boost to efforts to get a texting ban passed through both chambers of the State Legislature.

Families Against Texting While Driving called and sent email messages to members of the State Assembly Tuesday afternoon to urge the Assembly to pick up and pass the measure making texting while driving a primary offense.

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Kelly Cline, her family and Senator Kennedy in the foreground at launch of Families Against Texting While Driving