

PRESS RELEASE FROM
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, Sept. 10, 2015



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Legislators Sign AT&T's "It Can Wait" Pledge

Spencer to make September "Distracted Driving Awareness Month"



Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory signs AT&T's "It Can Wait" pledge not to text and drive on Sept. 9 at the William H. Rogers Legislature Building in Hauppauge.

HAUPPAUGE, N.Y. – Suffolk County Legislature Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory, 18th District Legislator William "Doc" Spencer, M.D. and other legislators yesterday joined AT&T representatives to sign the company's "It Can Wait" pledge to keep their eyes on the road and not on their phones.

“Suffolk County was the first in New York to prohibit texting and driving, thanks to legislation sponsored by my colleague Jay Schneiderman,” said Presiding Officer Gregory. “The state later followed suit, but too many people still give in to the temptation to text and drive. It may only take a second to read a text, but it also only takes a second for a life to be lost. By taking AT&T’s ‘It Can Wait’ pledge, drivers make an active decision to put their phones down.”

For the remainder of September, participating legislators will compete to gather the most “It Can Wait” pledges from members of the public. Pledge boards will be available for constituents to sign in district offices, and pledges can also be submitted through Twitter by using each legislator’s assigned “It Can Wait” hashtag. Drivers can also take the pledge by visiting itcanwait.com. To date, more than 7 million people have taken the pledge.

“AT&T thanks the esteemed members of the Suffolk County Legislature for their leadership in educating drivers to keep their eyes on the road and not their phones; it really all can wait,” said Marissa Shorenstein, New York president, AT&T. “When we launched ‘It Can Wait’ five years ago, the message was loud and clear: No text is worth a life. The same now applies to all smartphone activities that people are doing while driving. We urge the public to take the pledge and to spread the message to their friends, family and community.”

Additionally, Legislator Spencer will introduce a resolution to make September “Distracted Driving Awareness Month.” Spencer previously introduced a resolution that made the third Thursday in September “Don’t Text and Drive Awareness Day” but plans to expand the initiative to include all forms of distracted driving. A recent survey by AT&T found that 7-in-10 people engage in smartphone activities while driving; nearly 4-in-10 smartphone users tap into social media while driving. Almost 3-in-10 surf the net. And surprisingly, 1-in-10 video chat.

“AT&T could not have said it better: No text is worth a life,” said Legislator Spencer. “It’s alarming that people are not only texting, but also answering emails and even getting on Facebook while behind the wheel. Distracted Driving Awareness Month will challenge drivers to pause and think critically about their use of smartphones while on the road.”

“We are trying to send a message that trying to send a text message while driving is just too dangerous,” said 2nd District Legislator Jay Schneiderman, who sponsored the bill that banned texting and driving in Suffolk County in 2008.

Drivers wishing to participate in the Legislature’s challenge should tweet “I pledge not to text and drive” with the hashtag “#ICWLegislatorLASTNAME”. For example, constituents of Legislator Spencer should use the hashtag “#ICWLegislatorSpencer.”

To learn more about AT&T’s “It Can Wait” initiative, visit itcanwait.com.

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