

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

WILLIAM R. SPENCER, M.D.
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATOR
EIGHTEENTH DISTRICT
15 PARK CIRCLE, SUITE 209
CENTERPORT, NY 11721



CONTACT: **JENNIFER MISH**
LEGISLATIVE AIDE
OFFICE: (631) 854-4500
FAX: (631) 854-4503
Jennifer.mish@suffolkcountyny.gov

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2015



Pictured above are Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer, M.D., and Legislator Sarah S. Anker taking the pledge not to text and drive.

For the Safety of Everyone on the Road... Take the Pledge to Never TXT N DRV

Centerport, NY – By now everyone knows that texting while driving is a safety hazard that leads to thousands of injuries and deaths per year. In fact, 98% of people surveyed know that it is dangerous, but still, nearly 75% of drivers do it ([AT&T](#)). With the start of a new school year, Suffolk County Legislator William R. Spencer, joined by his colleagues and AT&T, **would like to take the opportunity to encourage drivers, young and old, to take the pledge not to text and drive.**

In 2012, Legislator Spencer introduced a resolution declaring September 19th of every year “Don’t Text and Drive Awareness Day” in Suffolk County. As technology continues to advance and the popularity of smart phones increases, drivers are losing focus even more, with distractions ranging from texting, to taking selfies, using social media, video chatting and “Vlogging”, web-surfing, and emailing. So that the issue can remain in the forefront of everyone’s minds, especially the minds of teen drivers and their parents, Legislator Spencer has proposed expanding the scope of awareness by declaring the entire month of September “Distracted Driving Awareness Month”.

“AT&T could not have said it better: no text is worth a life,” said Legislator Spencer. “It is 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. Together we can reverse this deadly trend by taking responsibility and pledging not to make that dangerous choice.”

“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” said Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory.

There is a clear disconnect between people knowing that distracted driving is unsafe, and their willingness to take the risk. We often think of distracted driving exclusively as talking or texting, but distractions come in many different varieties. There are 3 types of distractions which endanger drivers and others: **Visual:** taking your eyes off the road; **Manual:** taking your hands off the wheel; and **Cognitive:** taking your mind off of driving. These new activities that drivers are participating in are especially dangerous because they combine all three types of distraction.

“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.”

The Legislature kicked off the “It Can Wait” campaign pledge drive today, which encourages residents to make the commitment to themselves and everyone else on the road, not to text and drive! Through September 30th, participating district offices will compete to gather the most “IT Can Wait” pledges from members of the public. **Stop by Legislator Spencer’s office to sign the pledge board, or submit your pledge through twitter by tweeting “I pledge not to text and drive” with the hashtag #ICWLegislatorSpencer!** To date, more than 7 million people have taken the pledge; join us in making our roads safer for everyone!

###