



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

## Senator Kennedy Announces Thruway to Commemorate Anniversary of A.J. Larson's Death with "Don't Text While Driving" Message

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY December 3, 2012

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*Digital signs over the NYS Thruway will urge motorists to stay alert behind the wheel with no texting while driving reminder.*

*Larson's mother Kelly Cline relentlessly advocated for changes to state law to ban texting while driving.*

*Kennedy and Cline Remind Drivers: Keep Your Eyes on the Road and Off Your Phone.*

BUFFALO, N.Y. – On Monday, five years will have passed since A.J. Larson lost his life in a tragic texting-while-driving accident. In the years after his death, A.J.'s mother Kelly Cline has been relentless in her fight for changes in state law to ban texting while driving. Senator Tim Kennedy, a member of the Senate Transportation Committee and an outspoken advocate against distracted driving, announced today the New York State Thruway Authority will display a "Don't Text While Driving" reminder on the digital signs throughout New York State to commemorate the five-year anniversary of A.J. Larson's death.

From December 3-5, the message on the digital signs will read "Don't Text While Driving. It's the Law." In coordination with the "no texting" message, New York State Police Troop-T will ramp up their enforcement efforts of the state's ban on texting while driving.

Kennedy and Cline thanked the Thruway Authority and State Police for helping commemorate A.J.'s passing with these positive and important actions to help save lives.

"Across our state, nobody has worked harder and nobody has poured more of themselves into the fight to end distracted driving than Kelly Cline," said Senator Kennedy. "After she lost her son A.J. Larson, she channeled her grief into action and fought for positive change and safer roads across New York State. I've been proud to partner with Kelly in our efforts to ban texting while driving in Erie County and throughout the state. After Kelly suggested contacting the Thruway Authority to encourage them to display a 'Don't Text While Driving' reminder on the anniversary of A.J.'s passing, I knew they would be willing to help. I thank the Thruway Authority and the State Police for coordinating their efforts to boost awareness and enforcement, and I urge all New York motorists to keep your eyes on the road and off your phones."

"It's been five years since we lost A.J., and I miss my boy every day," said Kelly Cline. "While we've made great strides raising awareness of the dangers of texting-while-driving, people

still need to be reminded. Thank you to the Thruway Authority and State Police for displaying the message and enforcing the no-texting law.”

Thruway Authority Chairman Howard P. Milstein said, “As this tragic case demonstrates, texting while driving can be a fatal distraction. Thanks to tougher legislation proposed and signed by Governor Andrew M. Cuomo in 2011, police agencies across New York have stepped up enforcement of this critical law. We encourage all drivers to drive safely at all times.”

Since the statewide ban on texting while driving was signed into law, the Thruway Authority and the State Police have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to enforcing the law and ending distracted driving. They have led the way in their coordinated efforts to improve the safety of New York’s roads.

When Kennedy was an Erie County legislator, he and Cline led an effort to ban texting while driving in Erie County. After taking office in the State Senate, Kennedy and Cline teamed up again to form Families Against Texting While Driving, an advocacy organization that made a statewide texting ban its top priority. In June 2011, months after the group’s inception, Families Against Texting While Driving helped shepherd the statewide texting-while-driving ban – which was strongly supported by Governor Andrew Cuomo and cosponsored by Senator Kennedy – through both houses of the State Legislature and onto the Governor’s desk to be signed into law.

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*Senator Timothy M. Kennedy represents the New York State Senate’s 58th District, which is comprised of the towns of Cheektowaga, Eden, Hamburg and West Seneca, the city of Lackawanna and parts of the city of Buffalo. More information is available at [kennedy.nysenate.gov](http://kennedy.nysenate.gov).*