



MEDIA ALERT

CONTACT:

Emily Stein emily@saferoadsalliance.org 617-417-3689

Anna Cheshire Levitan anna@textlesslivemore.org 617.571.7823

July 11 Rally & Press Conference at the Massachusetts State House

“PASS HANDS-FREE IN MASS NOW”

Advocacy Groups Gather at the Massachusetts State House to Push for Hands-Free Legislation in Massachusetts to End Deadly Driving Epidemic

WHEN: July 11, 2018, 12:30 p.m.

WHERE: Massachusetts State House Steps, 24 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02133

EVENT OVERVIEW

In support of passing Hands-Free legislation in Massachusetts, members of advocacy groups committed to ending distracted driving, including TextLess Live More, Safe Roads Alliance, Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition, WalkBoston, LivableStreets, MassBike, and Boston Cyclists Union, will hold a rally and press conference on the steps of the Massachusetts State House to advocate for Hands-Free legislation in Massachusetts.

Our call-to-action is for Hands-Free legislation be put to a House Vote before July 31, 2018 – the last day of formal session for legislation that requires a roll call vote, as in the case of a hands-free legislation.

Massachusetts is one of two New England states without Hands-Free legislation. Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island have all passed Hands-Free legislation. Rhode Island’s Hands-Free law went into effect on June 1, 2018.

The Massachusetts Senate approved a bill (S.2103) which bans the use of handheld devices while driving in 2016 and 2017. Governor Baker endorsed hands-free legislation in November 2017, but the House bill (H3660) which bans the use of handheld devices has been stalled and not brought to a vote. We are advocating for the House to bring hands-free legislation up for a vote.

Our advocacy groups work to end distracted driving and the loss of life and serious injuries it causes to motorists, passengers, pedestrians and cyclists on the streets, highways, roads and sidewalks across Massachusetts. These crashes caused by distracted driving are not accidents, they are 100% preventable.

JULY 11th SCHEDULE

12:30 – 1:00 p.m.: Press Conference (“Pass Hands-Free in Mass”) – Remarks by TextLess Live More, Safe Roads Alliance, WalkBoston, LivableStreets, MassBike, and Boston Cyclists Union

- Recognizing the importance of a Hands-Free Massachusetts, which will save lives and reduce crashes caused by distracted driving
- Acknowledging all Massachusetts families and friends of those lost to distracted driving
- Acknowledging 79% of Massachusetts voters support a handheld ban, according to MassInc Polling, 55% of which *strongly* support banning handheld devices unless in hands-free mode
- Issuing a call to action for the Massachusetts House of Representatives to bring Hands-Free legislation to a vote before the end of the formal session – July 31, 2018.
- Questions from the Press

1:15 p.m.: Massachusetts State House Visit – Members of the Massachusetts House of Representatives

- Pass Hands-Free in Mass rally attendees will enter the Massachusetts State House to visit individual State Representatives to lobby and voice support for Hands-Free legislation being put up for a vote before July 31, 2018.

Rally Attendees

Attendees for the Pass Hands-Free Legislation on July 11 at the Massachusetts State House include:

- Emily Stein, President of Safe Roads Alliance
- Merritt Levitan’s parents Richard and Anna Cheshire Levitan
- Student Members of TextLess Live More & Friends of Merritt Levitan
- Students in TEEP – Trinity Excellence in Education Program – Trinity Boston Foundation
- Priscilla Andrade, TEEP Program Director, Trinity Boston Foundation

About TextLess Live More

TextLess Live More, a student-led, national awareness campaign to end distracted driving, was founded in honor of Merritt Levitan, an 18 year old young woman who was hit by a distracted driver in July 2013, nearly five years to the date of the rally. Recognizing digital distraction and distracted driving as the critical issue facing their generation, Levitan’s high school friends at Milton Academy founded TextLess Live More in the aftermath of her death. TextLess Live More’s mission is to end distracted driving, prevent crashes associated with distracted driving, and save lives. TextLess Live More is a partner of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), the nation’s premier youth

health and safety organization. TextLess Live More has presented at schools and communities nationwide to increase awareness of distracted driving. www.textlesslivemore.org

CONTACT:

Anna Cheshire Levitan, TextLess Live More, anna@textlesslivemore.org, 617-571-7823

About Safe Roads Alliance – Safe Roads Alliance was formed in 2006 as a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives through better driving. Safe Roads provides educational services to all drivers on different aspects of driving safety, including: distracted driving, novice driver training, and seatbelt use. It publishes The Parent’s Supervised Driving Program, a guidebook that is distributed in 24 states.

CONTACT: Emily Stein emily@saferoadsalliance.org 617-417-3689



Left: Merritt Levitan, killed by a distracted driver in early July 2013

Center: TextLess Live More Student

Right: High school students sign the TextLess Live More pledge to Never Text and Drive or Drive Distracted

Photos courtesy TextLess Live More