

**Remarks prepared for
David Strickland, Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration**

**AAA, DOT, and Seventeen magazine
National Two-Second Turn Off Day
Washington, DC
September 17, 2010
“Stay Alive When You Drive”**

Good morning. I'm delighted to join you for Two-Second Turnoff Day. On behalf of Secretary LaHood and everyone at the Department of Transportation, I would like to thank Triple A and Seventeen magazine for their leadership on this important safety issue and also the General Federation of Women's Clubs for being a partner in this effort.

Texting and talking on the phone while behind the wheel can be a deadly combination.

I want to thank all of you taking the pledge today to turn off your phones. Your choice will keep you and

your friends and family, safe. You are choosing to be a part of the solution to distracted driving crashes and you are helping us spread the word.

I especially want to congratulate all the participating teens who have shown their creativity and commitment to spreading the message with their video entries. They were great.

Why are we so concerned about this issue? During 2008 alone, distracted driving-related crashes caused nearly 6,000 deaths and more than half-a-million injuries. You can read about distracted driving

crashes daily in newspapers and police logs across the country.

For Americans aged 3-34, the leading cause of death is motor vehicle crashes. And the danger is especially great for teenagers, like you.

It could be as simple as the distraction of having too many people in your vehicle who are chatting or texting and playing the radio and having a great time and doing no harm to anybody—except to the driver, who gets distracted.

**It's not "bad kids" or "problem" kids who are dying—
it is good kids, great kids ... it is kids ... making bad
decisions ... I find this especially heartbreaking
because we all know that every one of these tragic
losses is unnecessary. Crashes caused by distracted
drivers are 100 percent preventable.**

**As you know, the Department has taken the lead and
engaged in an all-out assault on this problem. Under
the continued leadership of Secretary LaHood, I think
it's safe to say the Department has been on a rampage
against distracted driving for more than a year – with**

special emphasis on preventing texting and talking on the phone.

You see it every day: Drivers swerving in their lanes, stopping at green lights, running red ones, or narrowly missing a pedestrian because they have their eyes and minds on their phone, not the road. When you are behind the wheel, you should be focused on driving. Keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the steering wheel.

That's why I fully support the Two-Second Turnoff.

Staying alive on the road has everything to do with the

choices we make when we get behind the wheel. This rally drives home that point and reminds all of us that we need to give our undivided attention to the road ahead when we're in the driver's seat.

Thank you.