

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood Applauds Indiana for Enacting Tough Ban on Texting While Driving

WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood today praised Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels for signing a stiff new law that bans texting while driving. The law makes Indiana the 32nd state to prohibit texting behind the wheel.

“Distraction is still a factor in too many serious crashes,” Secretary LaHood said. “But the bill signed today by Governor Daniels will help make Indiana roads safer.”

Under the new law, effective July 1, violators face a maximum fine of \$500. The law extends Indiana’s current texting ban to all drivers. Drivers under 18 are also prohibited from all cell phone use.

With the addition of Indiana, 32 states, the District of Columbia and Guam have now banned text messaging by all drivers. Further, eight states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands have prohibited all hand-held cell phone use while driving.

In 2009, Secretary LaHood launched a national anti-distracted driving campaign modeled on other successful NHTSA efforts to reduce fatalities, such as its *Over the Limit*, *Under Arrest*, and *Click It Or Ticket* campaigns to curb drunk driving and increase seat-belt use.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has launched a dedicated website, Distraction.gov, to provide the public with a comprehensive source of information on distracted driving. The Department has also hosted two national summits devoted to the issue, crafted sample legislation which states can use to adopt distracted driving laws and initiated pilot law enforcement programs in Hartford, Conn., and Syracuse, NY.

In November, the Department of Transportation announced "Faces of Distracted Driving," a video series featuring people from across the country who have been injured or lost loved ones in distracted driving crashes. To watch videos from the "Faces of Distracted Driving" series or learn more about the U.S. Department of Transportation's campaign against distracted driving, visit www.distraction.gov.