

# AG Kilmartin Visits Coventry High School

Attorney General Kilmartin and guests shared the importance of not text messaging while driving.

By [Lauren Costa](#) | September 28, 2012



Rhode Island Attorney General Peter F. Kilmartin joined by RI State Police Major David P. Tikoian, RIDOT State Traffic Engineer Robert Rocchio and AT&T New England President Patricia Jacobs visited [Coventry High School](#) on Thursday morning to present to students the importance of not texting while driving. The group brought AT&T's powerful national campaign "Txtng & Drivng...It Can Wait" to students through a short speaking program followed by a documentary featuring families impacted by texting and driving accidents. Students then signed a pledge to not text and drive during their lunch periods.

Coventry High School was the second stop in the tour of approximately 10 schools that will view the presentation by year end and Amy Kempe, Public Information Officer for AG Kilmartin says that the response has been very positive so far.

"During our first presentation in Cranston, the kids were very receptive. You could hear a pin drop during the assembly," she said. "The video we show is very moving."

AT&T New England President Patricia Jacobs agreed with Kempe that the students are taking the message home with them.

"The message is really resonating with and having an impact on the kids and I strongly believe that when they agree to sign the pledge, it is a sincere gesture," said Jacobs. "When we kicked off the campaign on September 19 as "National Don't Text and Drive Day", we meant for it mark the beginning of a change that will last forever, not just for teens, but for their parents as well."

"I tell my own children that the text messages we send are important sometimes," she continued. "I text my children that I love them. That's important, but even those messages can still wait."

RI State Police Major David P. Tikoian spoke to the students about some of his experiences with text message-related incidents.

"When a car accident involves text messages, we don't even like to call it an accident at that point," he said. "It is a crash. It could have easily been prevented."

Apart from the school visits, AT&T has also launched the website [itcanwait.com](http://itcanwait.com), which allows visitors to pledge on-line, get involved in awareness events and share their stories with fellow teens. Students from the schools being visited this year will receive cell phone holders that block keyboard access and rubber thumb rings inscribed with "It Can Wait", courtesy of AT&T to remind them to keep their eyes on

the road and make it to their destination safely. The company has also paired with numerous elected officials and celebrities to spread the word about the dangers of text messaging while driving.

"I think our partnerships with celebrities and elected officials is great because they are so persuasive and the kids really listen to them," Jacobs went on to say.

Attorney General Kilmartin sponsored the state's landmark legislation in 2009 banning texting while driving in Rhode Island and has been an advocate for driving without cell phone distractions since the late 1990s. Kilmartin was almost struck by a driver distracted by their cell phone at a construction site while working as a Pawtucket Police Officer - an event that really made him focus on the growing problem.

"The video that we show these students is very moving and it brings home the idea that cell phone-related accidents don't just happen elsewhere, but in our own neighborhoods," he said. "I would rather have the kids get a reminder in a video than have it be one of their friends or classmates."

"We are spreading the message to young drivers across Rhode Island: No text message is so important that it's worth taking your attention off the road and risking lives in the process," Kilmartin continued. "One, two, maybe three seconds is all it takes to lose control while driving."

Based on a study by the National Safety Council, more than 100,000 crashes a year involve drivers who are texting, causing life-changing injuries and death. Also, a recent AT&T wireless survey shows that 97% of teens acknowledge that texting and driving is dangerous, but 43% of them admit to doing it.

CHS Principal Michael Hobin reiterated the important message to his students and thanked AG Kilmartin and other guests for sharing the presentation.

"Kids often do not realize that their actions are dangerous and result in unintended consequences," he said. "Automobile crashes are the number one cause of death of young people today and distracted driving is certainly a contributing factor and a serious issue to address. We appreciate the Attorney General's office providing our students with such valuable and life-saving information."

To learn more about the "It Can Wait" campaign, visit [www.itcanwait.com](http://www.itcanwait.com) or [click here to view the documentary](#) that CHS students viewed on Thursday. [Click here to visit the Attorney General's page dedicated to the campaign.](#)