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MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL JOINS AT&T ENCOURAGING DRIVERS TO TAKE THE PLEDGE TO NEVER TEXT WHILE DRIVING TODAY – NATIONAL “DRIVE 4 PLEDGES DAY” DAY

Mayor Emanuel, AT&T promote the “It Can Wait” campaign – as more than 20 events raise awareness throughout Illinois today – including at AT&T Michigan Avenue Flagship store in Chicago

Mayor Rahm Emanuel joined AT&T Illinois today in urging Chicago motorists to take the pledge to never text while driving, as part of the “It Can Wait” campaign’s “Drive 4 Pledges Day.” AT&T Illinois is leading more than 20 events in Chicago and throughout the state encouraging motorists to take the pledge to never text while driving as part of the “It Can Wait” movement.

“It is important that we all commit to being as safe as we can on the roads, and eliminating texting while driving is a crucial step toward this goal,” said Mayor Emanuel. “I encourage all Chicagoans to join this pledge and honor their commitments, so we can work together to ensure safety while driving. It really can wait.”

The “It Can Wait” movement established today, Sept. 19, as “Drive 4 Pledges Day,” a national day to raise awareness and encourage drivers to take the pledge to never text and drive again. To date, more than 2 million people have taken the pledge and joined the movement to end texting while driving.

“Today, we encourage you to take the pledge to never text while driving again,” said AT&T Illinois President Paul La Schiazza. “Each one of us bears responsibility for our own actions behind the wheel. We can make the decision to drive more safely and we can even help change the behavior of others. Talk to your children – especially if they are teen drivers – and encourage them to take the pledge. It could save a life, even their own.”

In Illinois, public officials are working to help end texting and driving. Mayor Emanuel has issued a proclamation commemorating this movement this week in Chicago.

Additionally, the General Assembly passed and Gov. Quinn signed into law this year a strengthened ban on texting while driving. Now Gov. Quinn proclaimed September as “No Texting While Driving Awareness Month” in the state and proclaimed today as “Drive 4 Pledges Day” in Illinois to support the “It Can Wait” movement.

Secretary of State Jesse White, who initiated the 2009 legislation to ban texting while driving in Illinois, will add a link on the Secretary of State’s website to a chilling, new AT&T documentary on the consequences of texting while driving called “From One Second to the Next.”

A ConnectSafely.org survey found that individuals who speak up can have a profound impact, particularly on teens.

- 78% of teen drivers say they’re likely not to text and drive if friends tell them it's wrong or stupid.
- 90% say they’d stop if a friend in the car asked them to.
- 93% would stop if a parent in the car asked them to.
- 44% say that they would be thankful if a passenger complained about their texting while driving.

The It Can Wait movement is already making a difference. One-in-three people who’ve seen the texting while driving message say they’ve changed their driving habits, the campaign has inspired more than 2.5 million pledges never to text and drive and the recently launched "From One Second To The Next" documentary has received more than 2 million views since Aug. 8.

To take the pledge and get more information, visit www.ItCanWait.com.

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