

KATHARINE M. WATSON, MEMBER

ROOM B-16 MAIN CAPITOL  
PO BOX 202144  
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-2144  
PHONE: (717) 787-5452

**DISTRICT OFFICES:**  
1410 WEST STREET ROAD, SUITE B  
WARMINSTER, PA 18974  
PHONE: (215) 674-0500

13 WEST CREAMERY ROAD  
P.O. BOX 166  
HILLTOWN, PA 18927  
PHONE: (215) 453-7888



*House of Representatives*  
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

AGING & OLDER ADULT SERVICES  
REPUBLICAN CHAIRMAN,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CARE & SERVICES  
ETHICS  
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES  
LIQUOR CONTROL  
POLICY  
CO-CHAIRMAN, HEALTHCARE REFORM  
TRANSPORTATION  
REPUBLICAN CHAIRMAN,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

CAUCUSES

ALZHEIMER'S  
DIABETES  
FIREFIGHTERS & EMERGENCY SERVICES  
RENEWABLE ENERGY

APPOINTMENTS

INTRAGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL  
ON LONG-TERM CARE

**TO:** All House Members  
**FROM:** Representative Kathy Watson (Bucks, 144)  
**SUBJECT:** Co-sponsorship of Legislation to Prohibit Text Messaging  
While Driving  
**DATE:** December 9, 2010

In the near future, I will be introducing legislation prohibiting the act of text messaging while driving. This legislation would make violation of the texting ban a primary offense for all Pennsylvania drivers, and includes a fine of not less than \$50 and not more than \$100, as well as an assessment of one point on the driver's record.

Texting while driving is a growing problem that U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood now calls "a menace to society." According to USDOT research, 6,000 people a year die as a result of accidents caused by distracted drivers. The act of "texting" causes a driver to take his/her eyes off the road and hands off the wheel; there is a large body of evidence that validates texting while driving as the most dangerous form of distracted driving. Virginia Tech's Transportation Institute conducted several large distracted driving studies and concluded that the risk of a crash by a driver who is texting is 23 times higher than the risk faced by a non-distracted driver.

**Thirty states already have enacted legislation banning texting while driving.** Therefore, I am asking that Pennsylvania respond to the national consensus on the issue. Please consider:

- A 2009 New York Times/CBS News poll indicated that 97 percent of Americans support a prohibition on texting while driving.
- A 2009 national survey by AAA indicated that 87 percent of drivers consider texting while driving to be "a very serious threat" to their personal safety.
- In January of 2009, the National Safety Council called on state and federal lawmakers to ban texting while driving.

This legislation will save lives. There have been far too many tragic stories of drivers who have been killed or who have accidentally killed others because they made the fatal mistake of texting while driving. I respectfully encourage you to support this legislation. To sign on as a cosponsor, please contact Meredith Schuler in my office at (717) 787-5452 or via e-mail at [mschuler@pahousegop.com](mailto:mschuler@pahousegop.com).