

## **MEDIA ALERT**

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### **Safety advocates to announce most sweeping nationwide proposal to address U.S. truck and bus driver talking, texting and other distractions**

**WHAT:** AUDIO TELECONFERENCE – Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety ([www.saferoads.org](http://www.saferoads.org)) will hold a news conference to announce details of the most sweeping proposal to date to address cell phone talking, texting, and other distractions experienced by truck, bus and large passenger van operators throughout the United States.

Audio teleconference access information:

U.S. Toll Free Access Number: 877-366-0711

Canadian Toll Free Access Number: 866-627-1651

Then enter participant code: 58436720 followed by the # sign

**WHEN:** **Thursday, September 24, 2009 at 11:30 am ET**

**WHO:**

- ▶ Jacqueline Gillan, Vice President, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
- ▶ Jerry Donaldson, Senior Research Director, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
- ▶ Henry Jasny, General Counsel, Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety
- ▶ Elissa and Jamie Schee (Ocala, Florida), whose daughter Frances “Margay” Schee, age 13, was killed September, 23, 2008, when a tractor trailer rammed into the back of a stopped school bus with lights flashing, resulting in the vehicles catching fire. Margay died in the fire. The truck driver’s cell phone use was a contributing factor in the fatal crash.

**WHY:** Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety is a national leader on commercial motor vehicle safety issues and is alarmed by the growing use of electronic devices by motor vehicle operators.

**FACT:** About 5,000 people are killed and 100,000 are injured annually in crashes with large trucks. Trucks are only 3% of registered vehicles, but are involved in 12% of all traffic fatalities.

**FACT:** Numerous studies have found that the crash risk for drivers using cell phones is substantially increased compared to drivers not using cell phones. For example –

- A recent Virginia Tech study, the first to investigate the effects on crash risk of reading and sending text messages, found that texting increased the risk of a safety-critical driving event for truck drivers by 23.2 times.
- An observational study in 2006 found that drivers using cell phones failed to stop at stop signs 10 times more often than drivers not observed using cell phones.

**FACT:** 25 percent of all police-reported crashes may involve distracted driving according to a National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimate. (June 2006).

**FACT:** At any given moment, 1 of 10 motorists are using cell phones while driving. (NHTSA, June 2008) Eight of 10 motorists admit to talking on a cell phone while driving and nearly half claim that they were hit or nearly hit by someone talking on cell phone. (Nationwide Insurance, August 2009).

**AN ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT will be available at [www.saferoads.org](http://www.saferoads.org).** Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety is an alliance of consumer, health, law enforcement and safety groups and insurance companies and agents working together to make America’s roads safer.