

**For Immediate Release:**  
March 31, 2014

**For More Information Contact:**  
Rachel Farrer

**Jesse White Reminds Drivers to Drive Safely; Avoid Distracted Driving**  
*April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month*

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White is reminding people to travel safely and avoid driving while distracted as April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month.

“As the weather warms and travel increases, I encourage everyone to put away their cell phones while they are behind the wheel and focus completely on the task at hand: driving safely,” said White. “Studies show that distracted driving contributes significantly to otherwise preventable fatal crashes.”

A recent study commissioned by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) that was conducted by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute found that the use of handheld cell phones increase the risk of a crash by three times. According to U.S. Department of Transportation, in 2012 over 3,300 people were killed in crashes involving distracted driving.

Texting while driving is perhaps the most dangerous form of distracted driving. According to NHTSA, driving while texting is six times more dangerous than driving while drunk and texting drivers are 23 times more likely to be involved in a crash than drivers not texting.

Illinois has been a national leader in efforts to combat distracted driving. White chaired the state’s Distracted Driving Task Force, which led to the state’s ban on texting while driving in 2010. Over 5,000 people have been convicted of texting while driving since that law took effect Jan 1, 2010.

On Jan. 1, 2014, the new state law banning handheld cell phones while driving took effect. In the law’s first three months, more than 2,800 drivers having been convicted for texting, talking or dialing on a handheld cell phone.

###