

February 23, 2021

The Honorable Scott Oelslager  
Ohio House of Representatives  
77 S. High St., 13th Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

**Re: HB 74 (Oelslager, S.) Transportation Budget**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, Ranking Member Crawley and members of the Ohio House Finance Committee, my name is Cathy Richeson and I am here asking the committee to please keep the hands-free provision in the transportation budget as a primary law. I am honored that I have been called upon to speak on behalf of our son Captain Nathan Douglas Richeson, whom was killed in a selfish and senseless act called distracted driving.

As a mother, wife and Nana to Benjamin and Charlotte-I grieve, with every breath that I take. Family- our children-are the present and the future. I stand here before you today- to tell you that no parent should have to go to the funeral home to identify their child and then to drive behind the hearse to bring him back home. The time is now to stand up to distracted driving!

Nathan and his wife Alyssa were on their way to celebrate their second wedding anniversary when they had a flat tire on Interstate 77 just outside Cambridge, Ohio. Nathan was killed as he was completing this task on August 29 2014 @ 1540, by an individual whom was speeding, driving recklessly, found to have marijuana metabolite above the legal limit in her blood stream and texting two people at one time-one of whom was her mother. The person who struck and killed Nathan was sentenced April 29, 2016 at the Guernsey County courthouse, with Judge David Ellwood presiding. To the best of my understanding, she has been ordered to complete 6 months at the Eastern Ohio Correction Center and after her release will be on probation for three years. Her license has been suspended for 99 years.

Justice has not been served.

The laws set to provide safety and security to our law-abiding citizens is in sad disrepair, in that we do not have mandatory laws to address crimes such as distracted driving. My hope is that Nathan's death will not be in vain but will be seen rather as a ray of HOPE that sets a strong precedent to change the laws that govern our judges and prosecuting attorneys.

Nathan was a son, a brother, devoted to his family and friends and a loving and devoted husband. Nathan served his country with honor. Show him the honor he so deserves. I petition you to move forward with strength and courage and place a hands-free provision in the transportation budget as a primary law.

Take a strong step forward and hold people responsible for their actions, as you would your own children.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and your consideration of HB 74 and the Hands-Free Ohio provision.

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