

Mr. Chair my name is Peggy Riggs:

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you this evening. I am writing you on behalf of my entire family to share with you a story of our Beloved Son, David John Riggs.

On Tuesday, August 13, 2013, a quiet, summer night, David and I were talking about getting him ready to start his junior year at UMD. David was like a lot of 20-year-old college kids, and waited until the last minute to get ready for the upcoming school year. We shared some laughs and some disagreements about how we were going to get everything accomplished in just a few short days. But, the best part of our conversation was that we were spending time together – like so many other times I was blessed to share with David.

Shortly after we finished talking, I went upstairs to get ready for bed. For some reason, we will never know why, David decided to take his scooter out for a short ride.

Shortly after walking into my room, I heard the sound of a crash. When I looked out, I saw my husband, Craig's, car in the middle of the street – with the emergency lights flashing, my husband had been coming up the same street and saw our neighbor, holding David telling him to hang on. As my husband held our dying son in his arms, another young man stood over them, crying and saying "I'm so sorry"

On August 17<sup>th</sup>, David lost his life after being removed from life support, which we continued until his brother could get home from Afghanistan to say goodbye.

We later found out that the young man who struck and killed David in front of our house was texting a friend. David was at a stop waiting to turn into our driveway.

While I cannot adequately explain to you the hole this senseless tragedy has left in our family, I can tell you that on most days, it's unbearable, especially because, my husband and I and our sons, Matthew and Michael, should be making plans to attend David's graduation from UMD this May. Instead, we plan to spend that day at David's gravesite.

David should have been making future plans with his girlfriend of six years, Ciara. Instead, she is leaving for grad school in Colorado alone.

If the young, texting driver, had made the choice to keep his hands on the wheel and his eyes and mind on his driving, David would be here in September as a first time uncle, instead we will only be able to tell stories to our grand baby about their uncle David.

Our son lost everything, because someone decided to send a text message. There is no making sense of this avoidable tragedy. Texting and driving and driving distracted is at an all time high – just as drinking and driving was back in

the 1970s. It's time we join together and take measures to stop this dangerous and irresponsible behavior.

If increasing penalties for texting and driving will help decrease this behavior that is what needs to be done.

My husband, family and friends have spent the last two years trying to educate people on the deadly affects of texting and distracted driving. Anything you can do to help our cause is at least a beginning to safer roads for us, for you, and for all of our loved ones. No family should have to suffer a loss as we have.

In closing, I ask that you support this proposal for enhance penalties for texting and distracted driving – just like our lawmakers did in regard to drinking and driving.

On behalf of me, my husband and our family, and mostly, our Beautiful Son, David, thank you.