



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

**For Immediate Release:**  
August 16, 2011

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**Jesse White and Minonk's Fieldcrest High School Join Forces to Combat Texting While Driving**  
*White Takes Fieldcrest HS Pledge; signs "No Texting While Driving Wall" and encourages public to sign*

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White joined forces with students from Fieldcrest High School in the Secretary of State's tent at the state fairgrounds in an effort to heighten awareness about the dangers of texting while driving. The Fieldcrest High School students established the FOCUSED team (Fieldcrest organization of citizens undertaking safe and educated driving) to work toward making the roads safer, and they have traveled the state encouraging motorists to take the pledge and sign their "No Texting While Driving Wall."

"The message is simple: drive now; text later," said White. "When I chaired the state's Distracted Driving Task Force in 2008, I made it clear texting while driving should be banned statewide for drivers of all ages. Since the ban took effect in January 1, 2010, we are slowly seeing a change of behavior on our roadways, but not fast enough for my liking."

White noted that the fear of a traffic conviction on their driving record may influence drivers to refrain from texting while driving. More than 1,100 drivers have been convicted of texting while driving since the law banning this dangerous activity went into effect. There were 690 convictions in 2010, and through July 2011 there have been 482 convictions.

"I applaud Fieldcrest High School and these wonderful students for their commitment to raising awareness about the dangers of texting while driving," said White. "Youth leadership is a critical component of teen driver safety as teens are greatly influenced by their peers."

Fieldcrest High School was one of ten high schools to receive the prestigious 2011 Best of the Best Award in "Project Ignition," a national teen driver safety program sponsored by State Farm and coordinated by the National Youth Leadership Council.

White said he was honored to host the nationally recognized students as they displayed their "No Texting While Driving Wall" inside the Secretary of State tent. The students kept the wall inside the tent for the remainder of the day to encourage the public to take the pledge to refrain from texting and driving.

"With the increased use of technological devices, distracted driving has become a serious problem in our state and in the nation," said White. "No driver has any business texting while they are driving. I encourage everyone to take the pledge and sign Fieldcrest High School's No Texting While Driving Wall."

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that at least 25 percent of police-reported crashes involve some form of distracted driving.

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