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DA Launches No Refusal Initiative Ahead of Labor Day Weekend

District Attorney Devon Anderson announced today that her office is launching a no refusal initiative through the Labor Day Weekend. There will be extra prosecutors on duty to assist law enforcement agencies in filing cases on arrested intoxicated drivers throughout the weekend. Under the no refusal law, a search warrant will be issued to draw the blood of any suspected intoxicated driver who refuses to take a Breathalyzer test or to give a blood sample. The no refusal initiative will begin on the evening of Friday, August 29th and lasts through the morning of Monday, September 1st.

"No refusal is 24/7 in Harris County. However, a no refusal initiative allows us to have more prosecutors on duty, throughout the weekend, to help take intoxicated drivers off the roads more quickly," said DA Anderson. "Drinking and driving is never an acceptable combination. Have a plan in place before you decide to drink an alcoholic beverage: Designate a sober driver, call a taxi or make other arrangements that don't require you to get behind the wheel. Any of those options could save a life."

This announcement comes after last week's sentencing of Joseph Fiedor (case#:1415457). Fiedor was convicted of intoxication assault after he crashed into Precinct 1 Constable's Deputy Jeff Wooten on January 23rd. Deputy Wooten remains in the hospital today fighting for his life. Fiedor was sentenced to 20 years in prison, which is the maximum penalty for intoxication assault on a peace officer.

DA Anderson held a news conference with Adrian Garcia, Harris County Sheriff, Alan Rosen, Constable Precinct 1 and the Patel family who lost four of their loved ones to a drunk driver, Million Zeghergis (case#:1435309) on June 23rd. Zeghergis is facing four counts of intoxication manslaughter and one count of intoxication assault. He will appear in the 182nd District Court on September 11th.

Harris County continues to top the list of counties nationwide with the most DWI-related fatalities. The goal of the no refusal initiatives is to reduce the number of impaired drivers on the road, to lower the number of DWI-related crimes, and to save lives.