

STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE

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IMPAIRED DRIVING THE NEXT TARGET FOR BAKER

Gov. Charlie Baker will follow up his Tuesday filing of legislation to require drivers to use hands-free cell phone technology by taking part in a lobbying event at the State House to push his bill and announce additional legislation "regarding operating under the influence and impaired driving." Baker will join the Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition for an event that will be followed by door-to-door visits with legislators by members of the coalition to promote hands-free use of mobile devices while driving and other proposals. Victims and families of victims of distracted driving are expected to speak. The event comes the same day Baker is prepared to roll out his fiscal 2020 budget proposal, and will happen at the same time Sen. Brendan Crighton, Rep. Christine Barber and Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier hold a press conference outside the House chamber to announce their bill to give qualified immigrants access to Massachusetts' drivers licenses. The three legislators will be joined by supporters of the bill from 32BJ SEIU, MIRA Coalition, Brazilian Workers Center and REACH Beyond Domestic Violence . The debate over driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants has been quieter in recent years, and Gov. Baker opposes the concept, but proponents say it could improve safety by allowing the state to know who is getting behind the wheel. The Pew Research Center has estimated that as recently as 2014 there were 210,000 unauthorized immigrants living in Massachusetts. The bill's authors said 12 states, including Vermont and Connecticut, have passed legislation to allow eligible drivers to obtain drivers license regardless of immigration status. - Matt Murphy/SHNS