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Immediate Release  
February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013

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## Harris County District Attorney

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# DA's Office Sends Out Warning Ahead of March Festivities

*Additional prosecutors will work Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo,  
St. Patrick's Day and Spring Break weekends*

District Attorney Devon Anderson announced today that her office is launching a no refusal initiative every weekend in March as the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo and other festivities get underway. There will be extra prosecutors on duty to assist law enforcement agencies in filing cases on arrested intoxicated drivers. The first no refusal initiative weekend will start on Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup>, and last through the morning of Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

"Launching a no refusal initiative, which is funded by a state grant, allows us to get intoxicated drivers off the roads faster than on our 24/7 no refusal days. Extra prosecutors are made available to handle more drivers on the roads during big events or holidays," said D.A. Anderson. "We want you to enjoy the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Spring Break, and St. Patrick's Day but at the same time be safe."

Under the no refusal law, a search warrant will be issued to draw the blood of any suspected intoxicated driver who refuses a breathalyzer or to give a blood sample. In April 2013, the Harris County District Attorney's Office became one of the first Houston Area counties to enforce no refusal every day.

"The goal of the initiative is to try and lower the numbers across the board, reduce the number of impaired drivers on the roads and ultimately save lives," said Alison Baimbridge, Chief of Vehicular Crimes Section in the Harris County DA's Office. "If you plan to drink alcohol, please designate a sober driver. We hold a very disheartening national title of the most DWI fatalities. Let's share the message with family and friends to not drink and drive."

Over the past 3 years, the number of DWI related incidents in the month of March have remained unsettling. In 2011, there were 557 arrests and 3 fatalities. In 2012, there were 497 arrests and 0 fatalities. In 2013, there were 591 arrests and 2 fatalities.

For Spring Break and St. Patrick's Day, the Harris County District Attorney's Office also plans to have additional prosecutors working on Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup> through the morning of Monday, March 17<sup>th</sup>.

**NOTE: News Conference at 9a.m. with the Sheriff**