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Contacts:

House Passes Legislation Regulating Use of All-Terrain Vehicles *Bans those under 14 from Operating ATV's*

(BOSTON) – State Representative [name] joined [his/her] colleagues in the Massachusetts House of Representatives in passing legislation prohibiting anyone under 14 years of age from operating an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and imposing strict penalties upon those who ride ATV's recklessly or negligently.

"In the wake of tragic events, this bill will help to keep those who ride ATV's safe from harm," House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo said. "By banning those under the age of fourteen from operating ATV's, this bill aims to prevent future tragedies and keep our children safe."

"We have seen the rate of injuries related to ATV accidents rise precipitously over the last decade despite increased efforts around rider education and safety," Rep. Michael Costello, House Chairman of the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, said. "The large majority of these accidents have involved children. Tragically, we have experienced this danger firsthand in Massachusetts with the death of Sean Kearney, an eight-year-old boy from Plymouth, and many others. This bill will protect our children by keeping them off vehicles that they are ill-equipped to handle either physically or cognitively."

[Rep. Quote]

The bill prohibits any person between the ages of 14 and 16 from operating an ATV with an engine capacity greater than 90 cubic centimeters. The legislation dictates that those between the ages of 14 and 16 years can only operate an ATV under direct adult supervision.

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The bill would impose fines for operating an ATV under the influence of an intoxicating substance. The legislation would also instate fines, imprisonment – or both – for anyone operating an ATV recklessly or negligently and causing serious bodily injury to another individual.

Under this legislation, anyone under the age of 18 would have to complete a recreation vehicle and responsibility course approved by the Director of the Office of Environmental Law Enforcement before operating an ATV. In addition, the parents or legal guardian of an operator under 16 must complete at least one session of the safety course.

Protective headgear would also be required for those operating an ATV or riding an ATV.

The bill incorporates environmental safeguards by prohibiting ATV's that emit noxious fumes or make unusual or excessive noise. Further, the legislation prohibits the operation of ATV's in a manner that harasses or harms deer or other wildlife.

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