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Contact: Matthew B. Harakal  
The Century Council  
(202) 637-0077

**CONGRESSMAN HEATH SHULER (NC-11) WELCOMES BRANDON SILVERIA TO  
ENCOURAGE TEENS TO “MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE” DURING  
PROM AND GRADUATION SEASON**

*Nationally recognized speaker visits Henderson County to discuss the consequences of  
drunk driving and underage drinking with students*

**HENDERSON COUNTY, NC** — Congressman Heath Shuler (NC-11) worked with The Century Council, a national not-for-profit organization funded by distillers dedicated to fighting [drunk driving](#) and [underage drinking](#), to bring a life-saving lesson about the dangers of drunk driving and underage drinking to students at East Henderson High School today. [Brandon Silveria](#) and his father Tony spoke to students about the importance of “making the right choice” about alcohol, and that if students are under the age of 21, the only responsible decision is not to drink. Brandon is a young man who was involved in an alcohol-related crash at age 17 just before his high school prom.

“In 2007, 380 youths under 21 were killed in alcohol-impaired traffic fatalities during Prom and Graduation Season (April, May, and June),” said Congressman Shuler. “It is important we continue in our efforts to stop drunk driving and underage drinking. We must do more to keep our nation’s roadways safe and alcohol-free. I welcome Brandon and Tony Silveria back to North Carolina and am proud to have them with us today to communicate their life-saving message.”

“In [North Carolina](#) in 2007, 408 youths under age 18 were arrested for driving under the influence and 1,307 youths were arrested for liquor law violations,” said Jennifer Curley of The Century Council. “The goal with Brandon’s presentation is to raise awareness about this serious problem and help our youth to make the right choice about alcohol. I’m pleased we were invited to East Henderson High School today, and I am hopeful that Brandon and Tony’s words will resonate with the students.”

During the presentation, Brandon told students his wrenching story of how as a high school student he had everything a teenager could want—a job, a girlfriend and plans for the future—until he had a few drinks at a party and chose to drive home. After falling asleep at the wheel, crossing the centerline and crashing into a tree, he was left in a coma for three months and spent several years in rehabilitation. Brandon was so badly injured that basic motor functions such as walking, talking and swallowing had to be re-learned. He has permanent brain injury and suffers from dangerous seizures. Brandon’s presentations continue to receive standing ovations from students across the country.

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“What you become depends on the choices that you make,” said Brandon. “When I was 17, I had a job and a girlfriend. Because of my crash, I lost both of them. My hope is that by sharing my experiences with other young people, I can prevent others from being hurt or killed.”

Through educational efforts such as the Silveria lecture and video program, The Century Council educates students across the country about the hazards of underage drinking and driving. Since Brandon and his father Tony have become spokespeople for The Century Council, they have addressed well over three million high school students nationwide and have been featured on such television programs as “Rescue 911,” NBC’s “Today,” as well as media outlets across the country.

***The Century Council is a national, not-for-profit organization dedicated to fighting drunk driving and underage drinking. Founded in 1991, The Council is funded by distillers. For more information on The Council and its mission, please log onto [www.centurycouncil.org](http://www.centurycouncil.org).***

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