
Responsible Citizens for Less Laws
SB 402, Distracted Driving
Opposing

This bill is an issue of individual liberty versus public safety. It would make texting while driving a secondary offense for all Michigan drivers.

This is a secondary, vice a primary, offense of which the proceeds from violations go to the local public library.

How will this be enforced? There is a list of individuals who are exempted from this law. How can a policeman intuitively know who falls into the categories listed in the bill? Does the bill go far enough to address the problem? Is the juice worth the squeeze?

According to the Insurance Institute for highway Safety Highway Loss Data Institute the juice causes more accidents. Adrian Lund, of the organization said, "Texting bans haven't reduced crashes at all. In a perverse twist, crashes increased in 3 of the 4 states we studied after bans were enacted. It's an indication that texting bans might even increase the risk of texting for drivers who continue to do so despite the laws." Why? What do you do when you want to do something that you know you are not supposed to do? You do it secretly. In the phone-in-the-car situation you hide your phone below sight-of-view of others and pretend to keep your head up while really looking down. This seems to be even more dangerous than openly texting.

The opposition to this bill goes in two directions:

1. It is not strong enough to make a long-term impact on drivers. There are too many people exempt from the law. It would need to be an-all-or-nothing approach and it would have to be a primary offense. Even by doing it as a primary offense it is not likely to reduce accidents.
2. This is about individual liberty versus public safety. Enacting this weak law will probably cause more fatal accidents, at least according to the studies already conducted. A reasonable and responsible American citizen should be able to exercise his discretion in any circumstance.

As part of the opposition's view on this matter it may be a better way to incorporate the dangers of texting or using media devices in the vehicle during driver's education. Support a popular culture around abstinence from media devices while on the road, unless in extreme circumstances and only when a prudent opportunity arises. There are enough laws on the books that people do not pay attention to. The government should not bite through another law. Instead government should encourage parents to teach their children how to drive, and to model it as they drive. This can be done through private citizens erecting 501C3 charitable organizations that can popularize the message and would have a far better reach, because the citizens are directly behind and in front of a movement. We can brainstorm this issue and come up with a better solution. Perhaps we can come to common ground and call this what it is when it occurs and someone is obviously impaired by his texting, reckless driving, which is already on the books. No secondary offense is needed, no matter where the extra fine-money is designated. Please, don't enact yet another law to burden the hard-working, responsible American citizen. And do not follow suit with other states, we are better than that. Opposition to SB 402 is supporting the common-sense Michigander.