



## Senate Bill 285 Proponent Testimony

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Maharath and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety & Veterans Affairs Committee my name is Tom Balzer and I am the President and CEO of the Ohio Trucking Association (OTA) and the Ohio Association of Movers (OAM). Collectively, we represent over 1,000 trucking, moving, logistics and warehouse companies and allied vendor members. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony today in support of SB 285, which would strengthen penalties on those drivers who drive distracted. Also known as the "Hands Free Ohio" legislation, this measure is important to deter the use of wireless devices while driving, which in turn will save lives of Ohioans.

According to the State Highway Patrol, traffic fatalities on Ohio roads have been increasing, despite the fact that cars are safer now than ever before. Distracted driving has certainly contributed to the problem. Our truck drivers witness distracted driving by those in passenger vehicles on a daily basis, which not only puts their lives in danger, but also the lives of everyone else on the roadway. States that have implemented similar distracted driving legislation have seen a dramatic drop in fatality rates – between 25 and 50%.

The statistic around texting and driving are downright startling:

- The National Safety Council reports that cell phone use while driving leads to 1.6 million crashes each year.
- Nearly 390,000 injuries occur each year from accidents caused by texting while driving.
- 1 out of every 4 car accidents in the United States is caused by texting and driving.
- Texting while driving is 6x more likely to cause an accident than driving drunk.
- Answering a text takes away your attention for about five seconds. Traveling at 55 mph, that's enough time to travel the length of a football field.

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- Texting while driving causes a 400 percent increase in time spent with eyes off the road.
- Of all cell phone related tasks, texting is by far the most dangerous activity.
- 94 percent of drivers support a ban on texting while driving.
- 74 percent of drivers support a ban on hand-held cell phone use.

While the goal of this legislation is to save lives, it is also important to note that it will also be beneficial to our members, as crashes lead to delays, delays that cost businesses that rely on the logistics industry time and money. Reducing distracted driving will keep our drivers safer and allow them to deliver their goods on-time, without unexpected delays.

SB 285 is an important piece of legislation and one that the Ohio Trucking Association and Ohio Association of Movers are proud to support as it will save the lives of Ohioans. We would like to thank the sponsors as well as the DeWine Administration for their work on the bill. We urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom 16". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas A. Balzer, CAE  
President and CEO  
Ohio Trucking Association/Ohio Association of Movers