



**National Safety Council
Statement of Support for SB 285
Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee
May 27, 2020**

The National Safety Council (NSC) encourages you to support SB 285, a bill to ban the handheld use of mobile devices while driving. There must be an effort to pass strong laws banning the use of cellphones while driving, including hands free devices, enforce the laws to the fullest extent possible, and educate drivers on how serious a risk distracted driving poses. NSC is a nonprofit organization with the mission of eliminating preventable deaths from the workplace to any place through leadership, research, education and advocacy. Our 15,500 member companies represent employees at nearly 50,000 U.S. worksites, including nearly 1,700 in Ohio.

In 2018 alone, there were 996 fatal motor vehicle crashes resulting in 1,068 deaths on Ohio's roadways.¹ Distracted driving is a contributing factor in far too many of these preventable deaths nationwide. SB 285 recognizes that texting and email are not the only items that can cause distracted driving. Anything that requires drivers to take their eyes off the road, hands off the wheel or mind off the task of driving is inherently dangerous. Even attentive drivers are at risk when operating around someone who is distracted. In the five seconds it takes to send or read a text or email message, a vehicle traveling at 55 miles per hour will travel the length of a football field.² During that time, drivers can miss much of what is in their driving field, including stop signs and pedestrians.

Safe driving is a collective responsibility. Yet, many drivers still do not understand this risk. An NSC survey found 47% of drivers mistakenly believe they can safely text while driving, though many of these same respondents did not want others to do so. Eighty percent of respondents support laws that would ban the use of hand-held devices while driving, and 65% would support a total ban on the use of devices, including hands-free devices linked through dashboard technology.

SB 285 will help address the need for stronger laws and enforcement in Ohio. Your support for this bill would therefore send a strong message that it is our responsibility to keep each other safe on the road by keeping our hands on the wheels, our eyes on the road and our focus on the drive. It is just one important step in making our roads safer for everyone.

If you have any questions, please contact Tara Leystra, NSC State Government Affairs Manager at tara.leystra@nsc.org.

¹ https://statepatrol.ohio.gov/doc/2018_OperationalReport_Final.pdf

² <https://www.nhtsa.gov/distracted-driving/distracted-driving-kills>