



**Kirt Walker**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Nationwide

May 22, 2020

The Honorable Nathan H. Manning  
Ohio Senate  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

**Re: SB 285 (Kunze, O'Brien) Revise law relative to distracted driving**

Dear Chairman Manning,

On behalf of Nationwide, please support passage of SB 285, which revises Ohio's law relative to distracted driving. Nationwide, a Fortune 100 company based in Columbus, Ohio, is one of the largest and strongest diversified insurance and financial services organizations in the United States. An industry leader in driving customer-focused innovation, Nationwide provides a full range of insurance and financial services products.

Nationwide's mission is to protect people, businesses and futures with extraordinary care. SB 285 will protect Ohio drivers from close calls, erratic driving, and even deadly crashes caused by motorists trying to operate a vehicle while looking down with a mobile device in their hand. This legislation will allow drivers to only use hands-free mobile phone technology while operating a motor vehicle. The intent is to curb crashes and traffic fatalities caused by drivers distracted by their mobile devices.

The National Safety Council tells us that 1 in 4 crashes are due to mobile phone usage while driving. Countless lives could have been saved and many more serious, life-changing injuries prevented if drivers' attitudes were changed about driving while holding a mobile device. It's important that we create a mindset where distracted driving is viewed just as culturally unacceptable and undesirable as driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

A hands-free approach is practical and proven to be effective in reducing traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities. The Ohio Distracted Driving Task Force reviewed data provided by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for states that implemented hands-free legislation and concluded that they experienced an average 15.3% decrease in fatality rates within two years after their laws were enacted. Nationwide supports SB 285 to enable law enforcement to ticket drivers who are holding a mobile device while operating a motor vehicle, including texting, viewing videos or images, entering data, talking or broadcasting content.

Further, we believe that the exceptions in the legislation are reasonable to make exceptions for emergencies, for voice-activated technology, for navigation, and for "single swipe" activation if the device is not held by the driver. Nationwide's internal testing shows that hands-free devices have the potential to reduce in-vehicle distraction by up to 40%.

Again, thank you for your consideration to vote YES on SB 285. This legislation will save lives by keeping all eyes on the road and both hands on the wheel.

Sincerely,

Kirt Walker  
Chief Executive Officer

Cc: Senator Kunze, Senator O'Brien, Local Government, Public Safety and Veterans Affairs Committee