



**William J. Seitz**

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**MEMORANDUM**

To: Senate Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee  
From: Representative Bill Seitz  
Date: September 12, 2017  
Re: HB 95 Sponsor Testimony

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Chairman Uecker, Vice Chairman Wilson, Ranking Member Thomas, and members of the Senate Local Government, Public Safety, and Veterans Affairs Committee:

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony on House Bill 95 which Representative Hughes and I introduced to combat an issue that has becoming increasingly commonplace on our roadways: distracted driving. We have worked closely with the Department of Public Safety on this bill draft and it has their complete support. If this bill sounds familiar to you, it should, because the same bill passed the Senate under our sponsorship last session and then died in the House. Now, the House has passed it 82-12, so we are back here to solicit your support once again.

“Distracted driving” can be found everyday on the roads and highways in Ohio in a multitude of ways: manipulating electronic devices such as cell phones, iPads, and tablets; individuals checking their reflections in the visor or rearview mirror; scanning a newspaper, and many more instances. These practices can impair the ability of the operator of a vehicle to be fully cognizant of what is happening around them, thus leading to an increased risk of accidents.

HB 95 does not create a new section of criminal code within Ohio law. Instead, what Representatives Hughes and I have worked to do is make driving while distracted an additional penalty to a moving violation (a minor misdemeanor in Ohio) that a driver is being cited for.

This concept of an enhanced penalty can already be found in our traffic laws, for example, when an individual is caught speeding in a marked construction zone. Police would pull the motorist over and issue a ticket for speeding, but *in addition*, the driver would also receive an added fine for the construction zone violation. The penalty for distracted driving would work in this same manner.

The amount of the fine that will be assessed for the additional penalty of driving while distracted will be \$100 for each offense which is to be paid on top of the fine assessed for the original violation.

Thank you for allowing me to present sponsor testimony for HB 95 and I strongly urge your favorable consideration. At this time I am happy to answer any questions members of the committee may have.