



Chairman Uecker, Vice Chairman Wilson and Ranking Member Thomas, my name is Carolyn Mangas, and I am the Government Affairs Manager for the Ohio Insurance Agents Association (OIA). I am providing written testimony in support of Substitute House Bill 95.

Ohio Insurance Agents Association is the collective voice of 1,400 independent agencies that employ nearly 10,000 Ohioans. We promote, progress and protect the professional advice and guidance only independent insurance agents provide. OIA members write 82 percent of the commercial insurance policies and 44 percent of personal insurance policies in Ohio. Our purpose is to help our member agencies protect consumers and employers by offering them access to the best resources, tools and professional development programs available. OIA serves our members in four key areas: advocacy, professional development, business solutions and industry thought leadership.

We believe the changes proposed in Substitute H.B. 95 will make our roadways safer for Ohioans, as it is becoming evident that the number of automobile crashes that are the result of distracted driving is sharply increasing. As Rep. Hughes pointed out in his sponsor testimony, the Ohio State Highway Patrol reports that there were 13,980 crashes in 2016 that involved distracted driving, resulting in 26 deaths and 4,960 injuries. In addition to this statistic, a review of the past 10 years of the data contained in the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Crash Facts shows that the number of overall crashes is reversing a long trend of decreasing. While crashes decreased from 2006 to 2013 (with the exception of 2010), the number of crashes has been on an upward trend the last few years, with 23,596 more crashes occurring in 2016 than in 2014. Additionally, the number of fatalities and injuries have increased during these same years.

Substitute H.B. 95 will help make our roads safer by creating an enhanced penalty for drivers that commit a moving violation that results from distracted driving. While technology use can be blamed for a large part of driver distraction, the legislation includes a broad definition of distracted driving to encompass a variety of activities that are unsafe to perform while operating a motor vehicle. Drivers who are found to violate this new law will be required to pay a monetary fine or attend a distracted driver safety course.

Legislation similar to Substitute H.B. 95 received widespread support and passed the Ohio Senate unanimously last year.

I encourage you to support Substitute H.B. 95 to promote safer driving on our roadways. Please contact me if you have questions regarding our support of this bill.