



June 10, 2021

The Honorable Jeff LaRe  
Chairman, House Criminal Justice Committee  
Ohio House of Representatives  
Riffe Center  
77 S. High Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman LaRe:

On behalf of the members of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, I am submitting this letter in support of House Bill 283. HB 283 would prohibit a person from holding or physically supporting an electronic wireless communication device (EWCD) while operating a vehicle. HB 283 would move Ohio away from being an outlier state. Ohio is only one of four states to not make use of an EWCD a primary traffic offense for all drivers. Despite the fact that over the last five years (2016-2020) 66,000 crashes and 212 fatalities have been caused by distracted drivers, using an EWCD while operating a motor vehicle remains a secondary traffic offense. It is time for Ohio to join the other 46 states and change the culture of distracted driving.

Public Opinion Strategies recently conducted a poll of 1,000 licensed drivers in Ohio. Distracted driving is the most worrisome issue for these Ohio drivers. And these drivers observe distracted driving more than 50% of the time while they are driving. And the poll found that support for a new law to deal with distracted driving caused by EWCD is at 78%, with 45% of respondents strongly supporting this new law.

HB 283 is an important first step to begin the process of changing the culture, or norm, that currently exists. HB 283 will help to keep Ohioans safer as they share the road with others who are currently allowed to use EWCD while operating a vehicle. Distracted driving accidents caused by hand-held EWCDs are 100% preventable. Preventing these accidents will in turn stop the tragedy of an early, and preventable death for Ohio motorists and pedestrians.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce supports the passage of HB 283 as the first step in the public campaign to make hand-held EWCD usage unacceptable in Ohio. It is important that we all work to make the roads safer to use so that all commuters, road construction workers, and those that depend on the roads for their livelihoods return home safely at the end of the workday.

The Ohio Chamber thanks the sponsors for introducing this bill and we look forward to working with this committee and the other stakeholders to move HB 283 to a floor vote and ultimately, to enactment.

Sincerely,



Tony Long  
Director, Tax & Economic Policy  
Ohio Chamber of Commerce