



House Bill 283 Proponent Testimony

Ohio House of Representatives Criminal Justice Committee

Dom Tiberi Representing The Maria Tiberi Foundation

March 3, 2022

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 283.

My name is Dom Tiberi. Over the last 8 years, I have taken Maria's Message to 127 Ohio High Schools and to more than 120 thousand kids. I share with them the worst day of my life. I start every presentation the same way. I tell the kids that I am here for 2 reasons. The first reason, and the most important reason, is that they are loved and that their lives matter. The 2nd reason is because I could not bring her home! It was on September 17 of 2013 that my wife Terri and I lost our 21-year-old daughter Maria in a car crash. While we don't know what happened that night, her crash was attributed to an unknown distraction. She slammed into the back of a stopped semitruck on 270 at 53 miles an hour. Since that night my wife and I have been living a nightmare that we can't wake up from.

I speak today for all the parents and all victims out there who are living what I call hell on earth. I never wanted Maria to be a statistic, but the statistics don't lie. Car crashes remain the leading killer of our children, ages 8 to 24. Amongst all age groups, heart disease is the number one killer, followed by Cancer. Car crashes are the 3rd leading killer of all age groups. I ask you what is more preventable? The

other thing with statistics is that they all have names, and they all have families, and we all are hurting. I promise you I did not sign up for this and I wish I was not here.

We know that distracted driving is under reported. I would argue the majority of crashes we see every day can be attributed to some kind of distraction. It is now our mission to end this madness. My wife Terri and I have started the Maria Tiberi Foundation. We buy state of the art driving simulators and have placed nearly 50 of them around the State of Ohio primarily with police departments. They are used to help educate people on the dangers of distracted driving. We recently opened the first of its kind simulator school at the Tolles Career and Technical Center in Madison County. It features 25 simulators at a cost of more than 300 thousand dollars. Later this year we will open a 2nd school at the Eastland Career Center in Groveport with another 25 simulators.

I believe we need to do a better job of educating our kids. But we also need a hands-free law in Ohio because it will save lives. We have laws because the majority of the people will follow the law. I agree with Governor DeWine that we need to change the culture. We need people to understand that distracted driving is dangerous driving! I am a guy who wants to fix things but there is no fixing our nightmare. There are no do overs from death! We all are addicted to our phones and our electronics, and that is fine. But that addiction should not be allowed while driving a car. It is my belief that House Bill 283 will save the lives of Ohioans.

I will never forget the night that we lost Maria. I went to the hospital to identify her. My little girl laid on a gurney. I walked in and out of the room so many times. I could not believe I was leaving her. How could I leave her? But I had to. I ask you what you would do to save your children? As parents and Grandparents, we should be screaming that the leading killer of our children is car crashes. I ask that you support House Bill 283 because it will save lives.

Thank you for your time,

Dom and Terri Tiberi