

Ohio House of Representatives



State Representative Brian Lampton District 73

**Sub H.B. 283 – Sponsor Testimony
Senate Judiciary Committee
6 December 2022**

Chair Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas, thank you for the opportunity to provide sponsor testimony for Sub HB283, the distracted driving bill. Rep Abrams and I feel this is a critical step to address Ohio's distracted driving problems. The main intent is to change the culture of texting, emailing, virtual meetings, and recording videos while driving.

According to the Ohio State Highway Patrol, from 2013 through October 2022, more than 121,000 distracted driving crashes occurred throughout the state of Ohio. This resulted in nearly 60,000 injuries and 359 deaths. Distracted driving crashes continue to aggressively trend upward, but go largely underreported due to a difficulty in proving a driver is engaged in distracted driving activity.

Sub HB283 will make distracted driving a primary offense, rather than secondary. Currently only Ohio Nebraska, Missouri, and Montana are the only states without primary enforcement laws.

There are no criminal penalties contained in the bill, in fact, after a first offense, offenders can take a free online distracted driving course with no points assigned to that violation.

Additionally under Sub. HB 283, law enforcement officers must have probable cause by witnessing the driver violating the law and prohibits involuntary search and seizure. Likewise, to better understand the driving habits of Ohioans, HB 283 requires law enforcement to provide relevant citation data to the Ohio Attorney General's office, who will then generate a report to be shared with the Ohio General Assembly.

Hand-held use of phones would be permitted while the vehicle is stationary. It also allows for the driver to make and receive calls, hold the phone to their ear, and also allows for a touch or swipe to accommodate ride-share services.

Emergency and public safety personnel are exempt from the law while in the course of performing their duties, as well as Amateur Radio operators. Once approved and signed into law, there will be a massive public awareness campaign to promote safe driving along with a 6 month waiting period during which time no citations will be issued, only warnings.

I am a 30 year insurance agent, so I have seen crashes involving distracted driving, and I know these accidents are 100% avoidable. Not only are we all paying higher insurance rates due to the property damage involved, we are losing lives. Road construction workers and innocent law abiding drivers are being killed by distracted driving. We know the average time to look at your phone and re-focus back on the road is 6 seconds. At 45 miles per hour the distance traveled in 6 seconds is the length of a football field, 100 yards.

Representative Abrams and I have spent countless hours working to find compromise and listening to the concerns of our constituents, colleagues, and other government officials to get the version of the bill that sits before you today.

Bottom line: this new law will save lives.

This new law has very broad and bi-partisan support. This new law will reduce the incidence of distracted driving in Ohio.