



September 23, 2021

The Honorable Jeff LaRe
77 South High Street, 13th Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Dear Chairperson LaRe:

OhioHealth is a 12-hospital healthcare system that has served the community since 1891. We are a family of 35,000 associates, physicians and volunteers with over 50 ambulatory sites, hospice, home-health, medical equipment and other health services spanning a 47-county area throughout Ohio.

On behalf of the entire OhioHealth system, I appreciate the opportunity to offer comments in support of House Bill 283. I am grateful that this important and life-saving legislation has been brought forward and appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this issue.

As the medical director for OhioHealth Riverside Methodist Hospital's level II trauma center, I see traffic-related injury on an almost daily basis. I have also seen the positive benefits that injury prevention legislation can have on trauma center caseload. We can look at examples such as Ohio's seatbelt and booster seat laws or the numerous local ordinances mandating bike helmets for children to see the benefits commonsense legislation can have on injury and mortality rates.

House Bill 283 would:

- Modernize Ohio's texting law to require "Hands Free" use with primary enforcement;
- Prohibit drivers from having physical contact with their phones or other wireless devices while driving or stopped in a lane of traffic;
- Require drivers to use voice commands or single-touch activation to make calls, text, use GPS or listen to music on mobile devices; and
- Allow exceptions for emergency calls and emergency personnel, such as police and fire;

Provisions outlined in the dot points above all work to create a powerful deterrent that will result in fewer motorists using their cell phone while driving, leading to fewer accidents, fewer injuries, and fewer fatalities.

Despite current laws regarding speed limits, seat belts, booster seats, texting, and impaired driving, we know that some individuals will disregard the law. However, we also know that the behavior of many Ohioans following enactment of HB 283 will change, and they will avoid any cell phone use while driving. With hands free systems in motor vehicles becoming more



advanced, compliance with HB 283 will be easy and simple. This is a small step that you and our colleagues in the General Assembly can advance to keep ourselves, our families, and our fellow citizens safe.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. I respectfully urge you to pass HB 283 as soon as possible; this is life-saving legislation and is in the best interest of all Ohioans.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marco Bonta".

Marco J. Bonta, MD, MBA, FACS

System Chief, OhioHealth Trauma
Trauma Medical Director, Riverside Methodist Hospital