



September 23, 2021

Lee Ann Wurster MS, RN, TCRN, CPNP
Trauma and Burn Program Manager
Nationwide Children's Hospital
700 Children's Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43205

RE: HB 283 Proponent Testimony

Chairman LaRe, Vice Chair Swearingen, Ranking Member Leland, and members of the House Criminal Justice Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony on HB 283, which would classify distracted driving as a primary offense and band nearly all handheld cellphone activity while driving.

My name is Lee Ann Wurster and I am the Trauma Program Manager at Nationwide Children's Hospital. I have been a pediatric nurse for over 30 years with a background in trauma and pediatric intensive care. I have witnessed firsthand the devastating results distracted driving can have on children and their families. As a mother of two young drivers, I am compelled to speak out on behalf of HB 283 to share both a professional and personal perspective on the impact of distracted driving.

Trauma is the leading cause of death in children. For survivors, the aftermath of a single traumatic event is quite complicated. No one wakes up and expects to be the victim of a traumatic event such as a motor vehicle crash. And certainly no one expects their child to be hit by a car while going for a walk. These are life altering events that can happen without a moment's notice. In the instance of distracted driving, both the perpetrator and victim will likely suffer lifelong consequences of the event. From emotional dysregulation to alterations in cognitive and physiologic functioning, traumatic events can challenge even the healthiest individual.

At Nationwide Children's Hospital, on average, over one-third of deaths due to injury were caused by either a motor vehicle crash or pedestrian struck by a car. Many are reported to occur when the victim's car is simply sitting at a traffic light. Even more distressing is the victim that is in a cross-walk and is struck by an oncoming vehicle. These are traumatic events that are becoming increasingly more common as technology use rises. No phone call, text message or social media post is worth the impact of waking up one day, expecting to go about your day as usual, but then going to sleep that night without a child or loved one. We need common sense laws that hold people accountable and deter the behavior that encourages distracted driving.

On behalf of Nationwide Children's Hospital, thank you for allowing me to comment on this important legislation that will help protect Ohio's children.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lee Ann Wurster". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lee Ann Wurster MS, RN, TCRN, CPNP
Trauma and Burn Program Manager
Nationwide Children's Hospital
Phone: 614-722-6599
Email: leeann.wurster@nationwidechildrens.org