

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Scott Oelslager  
Chair, Finance Committee  
The Ohio House of Representatives  
1 Capitol Square  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Mr. Chairman,

As the primary national trade association for home, auto, and business insurers across the country, the American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA) proudly adds its support to the wide range of law enforcement personnel, safety organizations and transportation professionals endorsing the distracted driving provisions outlined in House Bill 74.

Auto safety is a top concern for auto insurers and APCIA. New technologies are making today's cars safer for drivers and passengers, but distracted driving remains a deadly threat to drivers in Ohio and across the country. In recent years, the country has seen a sharp increase in auto accident-related deaths, with an increase of nearly 14 percent between 2013 and 2017 – the biggest increase in more than a quarter century. Traffic fatalities in Ohio have been on the rise in recent years due in large part to the fact that more people have smartphones and are increasingly using them while driving.

The distracted driving provisions in HB 74 seek to stem the tide of rising traffic fatalities by modernizing Ohio's texting law and requiring "hands-free" use – prohibiting drivers from having physical contact with their phones or other wireless devices while driving or stopped in a traffic lane. If passed, this legislation could help reduce crashes, save lives, and make Ohio roads safer.

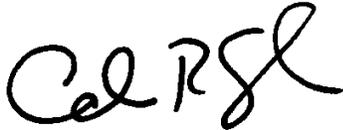
Nationally, more than 20 states have passed similar hands-free laws, and these states have seen reductions in traffic deaths. Of the 14 states that enacted these laws before 2018, 11 saw a decrease in their traffic fatality rates within two years after passing and enforcing new laws, according to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

APCIA applauds Governor DeWine and others for their efforts to make Ohio's roads safer. We believe the key to saving lives rests in consumer awareness, behavior change and strong enforcement. Making handheld device usage a primary offense with meaningful consequence, while arming law enforcement with the tools to curb this deadly behavior is the right thing to do.

We urge Ohio to enact these strong safe driving provisions. Tackling distracted driving is no easy task, but APCIA believes it is a task that we must take on, and we must take on together.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of our perspective. Please contact me directly at 847-553-3678 or via email at [adam.shores@apci.org](mailto:adam.shores@apci.org) or APCIA's Ohio counsel, Steve Buehrer at 614-365-4107 or via email at [buehrer@carpenterlipps.com](mailto:buehrer@carpenterlipps.com) with any questions. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. R. Shores', written in a cursive style.

Adam R. Shores