



**Statement of the National Safety Council Ohio Chapter and the National Safety Council
Ohio House of Representatives
House Finance Committee
Testimony Supporting HB 74
February 17, 2021**

The National Safety Council Ohio Chapter and the National Safety Council (NSC) encourages you to support the distracted driving provisions in HB 74, which would ban the handheld use of mobile devices while driving. NSC and the Ohio Chapter work to eliminate the leading causes of preventable death and injury, focusing our efforts on the workplace, roadway and impairment. We create a culture of safety to keep people safer in the workplace and beyond so they can live their fullest lives. We have more than 15,000 member companies representing employees at more than 50,000 U.S. worksites, including 1,600 in Ohio.

In 2019 alone, there were 1,153 motor vehicle related fatalities on Ohio's roadways.¹ Preliminary estimates by NSC show there likely will be a significant increase in motor vehicle-related fatalities in 2020 despite decreased traffic due to lockdowns earlier in the year.² This data show more needs to be done to improve the safety of our roads for all road users.

Distracted driving is a contributing factor in far too many of these preventable deaths. Anything that requires drivers to take their eyes off the road, hands off the wheel or mind off the task of driving is inherently dangerous. In the five seconds it takes to send or read a text or email message, a vehicle traveling at 55 miles per hour will travel the length of a football field.³ During that time, drivers can miss much of what is in their driving field, including stop signs and pedestrians.

Safe driving is a collective responsibility. Yet, many drivers still do not understand this risk. According to the AAA Traffic Safety Culture Index, 43.2% of drivers reported talking on a handheld cellphone while driving in the past month, 38.6% said they have read a text message or email and nearly 80% of respondents support laws that would ban the use of hand-held devices while driving.⁴

NSC believes there is no safe way to use a cell phone and drive; however, banning hand-held use of these devices is a step in the right direction. Primary enforcement of hand-held bans is also more effective at reducing fatal crashes than secondary offense laws.⁵

H.B. 74 will help address the need for stronger distracted driving laws and enforcement in Ohio. Your support for this bill would therefore send a strong message that it is our responsibility to keep each other safe on the road by keeping our hands on the wheels, our eyes on the road and our focus on the drive. It is just one important step in making our roads safer for everyone.

¹ <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813060>

² <https://injuryfacts.nsc.org/motor-vehicle/overview/preliminary-monthly-estimates/>

³ <https://www.nhtsa.gov/distracted-driving/distracted-driving-kills>

⁴ <https://aaafoundation.org/2019-traffic-safety-culture-index/>

⁵ <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/07/140725144457.htm>