**My Statement in Support of HB-51**

My name is John Gordon, and I am from Marion County, Ohio. I am a 42 year veteran of law enforcement with special training through the Ohio State Highway Patrol as a Technical Crash Investigator. Following the death of my only child in 2008, I became a Traffic Safety Advocate and created a Distracted Driving Safety Program called “Rusty’s Story.” I have educated over 31,000 people in four states about the dangers of distracted driving. My son’s fatal crash had two major contributing factors that caused his preventable death; the swerving into my son’s lane 27’ prior to impact and a hand-held electronic device which distracted the driving of the other person who caused the crash. I cannot be certain which one of these factors outweighed the other. Center Line Rumble Strips most likely would have alerted the other driver of the impending fatal consequence.

Left of Center crashes may be caused by a number of factors: falling asleep, impaired driving, and distracted driving, such as using electronic devices, eating and drinking, and grooming to name a few. Electronic hand-held devices actually go hand-in-hand with Left of Center crashes. A person who uses a phone while driving will normally hold it in their right hand to talk or read a message thus leaving the left hand to drive. The slightest amount of force will move the steering wheel downward, thus moving the vehicle to the left. But typically a person will use both hands to text or enter a phone number, and that leaves the vehicle to drive itself. Also the American Automobile Association in a recent study determined that Apple’s Siri was the most distracting electronic application used in motor vehicles. The mandate creating Center Line Rumble Strips on all state roadways will save lives as the noise and vibration will alert the driver to focus on the task at hand, driving.

Documentation from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) states that milled rumble strips provide significant reductions in injury crashes for vehicles that leave the designated lane by ten to 24 percent on rural freeways and 26 to 46 percent on two-lane rural roads.

During my training with the National Safety Council, the National Transportation Safety Board, and the USDOT, I was reminded of what most people seem to forget and that is that our brain makes us do everything, and our brain cannot multi-task. Our brain can only focus on one thing at a time. So when any type of distraction occurs while driving, we need to have our full faculties to avoid a collision. Center Line Rumble Strips will help regain focus and lower reaction time. Some automobile manufacturers have introduced lane departure warning systems (LDW). When the system detects that a vehicle is veering out of its lane, an audio, visual, or other alerts warn the driver of the unintentional lane shift so that the driver can maintain proper control; however, it is important to note that these systems do not take full control of the vehicle or keep the driver from operating it. Additionally this system fails to notify the driver if the roadway has no lane markings.

The USDOT reports that Center Line Rumble Strips are one of the proven countermeasures that will reduce the risks of crossing center line crashes. The noise and vibration produced by the rumble strips will alert drivers when they leave the traveled path.

The State of Minnesota conducted a Center Line Rumble Strips test for the safety effects on two-wheeled and three-wheeled vehicles. They concluded that there was no noticeable impact on the safe operation of these vehicles.

The Ohio Insurance Institute ranked Ohio 8th nationwide for the highest number of fatal crashes caused by distracted driving including the use of cell phones in 2017. That figure is inexcusable, and our laws must improve to prevent the tragic loss of life. If Center Line Rumble Strips saves one life, then this legislation will be worthwhile.

A few legislators will argue that the cost factor of this mandate is too high, but I ask you how do you place a dollar value on a human life, and what is the value of your family’s life?

Statement of:

John P. T. Gordon

5291 Morral Kirkpatrick Rd. W.

Morral, Ohio 43337

(740) 465-9212