

April 13, 2021

**Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee in Support of HB 4277-79**

Business leaders, community advocates, and families from across Michigan urge you to support passage of HB 4277-79, legislation that will prohibit the use of handheld personal devices while driving unless they are in a hands-free mode.

Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for an average of five seconds. At 55 mph, this is similar to driving the length of an entire football field with your eyes closed. It should be no surprise then that a driver is 23 times more likely to experience a motor vehicle accident while using their phone.

In any given moment, over 800,000 vehicles in the United States are being driven by someone using a hand-held cell phone. In 2017 alone, 3,166 people were killed in motor vehicle crashes involving distracted driving. Notably, the vast majority of people injured or killed in such an accident are not the driver, but other occupants of that vehicle, occupants of another vehicle, or pedestrians.

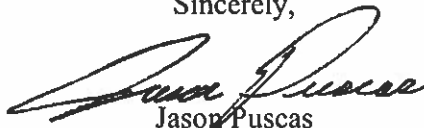
Twenty-four states have banned hand-held phone use by all drivers, including Arizona, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Illinois, Maryland, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

In a January 2020 poll commissioned by the Detroit Regional Chamber and conducted by the Glengariff Group of 600 likely Michigan general election voters, 88.3% supported legislation that would prohibit drivers from holding their cell phones while they are driving and require them to only use a hands-free driving devices. Notably, 77.5% of voters strongly supported such legislation, and only 9% opposed.

This legislation is long overdue. It is time for Michigan to join this growing list of states that are experiencing reduced crashes and fatalities and send a message to drivers, young and old, that their focus should be on driving safely behind the wheel of a car – not texting, posting, taking pictures, watching videos, viewing content, or communicating on a mobile device.

On behalf of Michigan's automotive industry and families all across Michigan, I thank you for your support in protecting our drivers, passengers, and pedestrians from injuries and fatalities due to distracted driving.

Sincerely,



Jason Puscas

Director, Government & Community Affairs  
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