

## August 27, 2009: Legislative News on Distracted Driving

### From the Gongwer News:

#### ***DRIVERS' CELL PHONES AND TEXTING DOMINATE SUMMERTIME BILL OFFERINGS***

Cell phone use while behind the wheel appears to be the legislative flavor of the summer with lawmakers in both chambers recently introducing five bills that seek to limit drivers' use of the devices.

Democrats sponsored all five measures, which join a previously introduced proposal to ban cell phone usage for 16-year-old drivers only (HB 130). However, Senate President Bill Harris (R-Ashland) has said he supports certain limits on the devices - a development that could prompt additional bills from Senate Republicans. (See Gongwer Ohio Report, August 13, 2009)

While all of the measures would prohibit text messaging while driving, they take different approaches to speaking on cell phones.

Rep. Connie Pillich (D-Cincinnati) and Rep. Nancy Garland (D-New Albany) are joint co-sponsors of the latest proposal (HB 270) that targets texting and driving. Rep. Michael DeBose (D-Cleveland) introduced a similar bill (HB 261) earlier this summer that includes a \$250 fine for such violations.

Rep. DeBose also offered a separate measure that would additionally prohibit speaking on a cell phone while driving.

Rep. Joe Koziura (D-Lorain) also sponsored a bill (HB 266) that would ban both texting and speaking on cell phones, but includes an exemption for drivers who use a hands-free device. Sen. Ray Miller (D-Columbus) introduced similar legislation (SB 160) in the Senate.

### **Current bills:**

HB 130 - [http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128\\_HB\\_130](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128_HB_130)

HB 270 - [http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128\\_HB\\_270](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128_HB_270)

HB 261 - [http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128\\_HB\\_261](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128_HB_261)

HB 266 - [http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128\\_HB\\_266](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128_HB_266)

SB 160 - [http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128\\_SB\\_160](http://www.legislature.state.oh.us/bills.cfm?ID=128_SB_160)