

MASSACHUSETTS VISION ZERO COALITION

FACT SHEET: Legislation requiring the hands-free use of mobile telephones while driving

Senator Mark Montigny (SD1383)

Representative Joseph Wagner and Representative Paul Donato (HD1534)

PURPOSE OF THIS BILL

This bill would ban the use of handheld electronic devices while driving.

Distracted driving is a public health epidemic on our roads that causes nine fatalities a day and injures nearly 400,000 people annually across the US (NHTSA). This bill would reduce overall phone use when people are behind the wheel, decreasing driver distraction.

This bill would assist police officers in enforcing the ban on texting while driving, which is ineffective because police officers cannot easily tell whether a driver is texting or dialing a phone number.

WHAT THIS LEGISLATION DOES

- Authorizes police officers to stop and issue citations to motorists using handheld mobile electronic devices
- Determines a penalty of \$100 for a first offense, by a fine of \$250 for a second offense and by a fine of \$500 for a third or subsequent offense.

SUCCESS IN OTHER STATES

If passed in Massachusetts, this law would bring the Commonwealth in line with 16 other states - including the neighboring states of NH, VT, NY, CT and RI. Recent data from Georgia shows a 22% decrease in driver distraction after they enacted their hands-free law (TrueMotion).

STRONG SUPPORT FROM MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS

MassINC has found little opposition in a 2018 poll. In January 2018, 79 percent strongly or somewhat supported “a ban on drivers using their cellphones, GPS or other electronics unless they are in “hands-free mode”, with an exception for making emergency phone calls.”

Contact: For more information, please contact Emily Stein at Safe Roads Alliance at emily@saferoadsalliance.org