

Hands Free to Make Colorado's Roads Safer!

SB 22-175: Concerning the use of mobile electronic devices when driving a motor vehicle

What It Does:

- Prohibits the use of a mobile electronic device for adult drivers unless using a hands-free device
- Drivers under 18 years of age are prohibited from using a mobile electronic device with few exceptions
- Requires data collection and annual reporting to combat potential bias in enforcement
- Provides statewide public awareness campaign in advance of effective date of the hands-free requirement
- Allows first-time offenders to show proof of purchase of a hands-free device and be found not guilty while in court

Please vote YES on SB 175!

Make Colorado roads safer!

Important Exceptions:

The following uses of a mobile electronic device are exempted:

- By a person reporting an emergency to state or local authorities;
- By an employee or contractor of a utility services provider when responding to a utility emergency;
- By a person operating a commercial truck when using a mobile data terminal that transmits and receives data;
- By a first responder;
- By a person in a motor vehicle that is lawfully parked.

Colorado Numbers:

50%

Percentage increase in Colorado traffic **deaths** since 2011.

90%

Of drivers self-report driving while distracted.

10,166

Number of crashes involving distracted drivers in 2020 (even with fewer drivers on the road due to the pandemic).

42

Crashes per day are caused by distracted drivers.

Travis Berry, Allstate/Progressive
720-560-2628

Ted Trimpa, NAMIC
303-507-1966

Kelly Campbell, APCIA
303-886-1629

Bill Skewes, State Farm
303-765-4766

Dan Jablan, Farmers/RMIA
303-870-6347

Daniel Furman, USAA
303-628-3483

Jennifer Cassell, Liberty Mutual
785-393-0472

Shelley Forney
Statement of Support of SB 22-175:
Concerning the Use of Mobile Electronic Device When Driving a Motor Vehicle
House Transportation Committee
May 3, 2022

Members of the House Transportation Committee:

I encourage the passage of SB 22-175 which would require handsfree accessories and ban the use of handheld mobile devices. As a mother who has lost my child and witnessed the tragic consequences brought on by a distracted driver, I urge you to please pass this needed law.

Despite the heartache of losing a child and having the month of April named “Distracted Driving Awareness Month” by Congress, bringing national attention to this issue and to my family in Fort Collins, the fatalities continue to rise, the use of technology while driving continues to rise, and Colorado laws stay unchanged.

On November 25, 2008, my daughter Erica was riding her bike home from school on the last day before the Thanksgiving break when she was struck head on by a distracted driver just around the corner from our home. The person who struck her was holding her phone talking to someone and was looking for something in her passenger’s seat. She drifted over eight feet into the bicycle lane. She did not know she had hit my daughter until it was too late. It was if she were driving blind – a ghost in the seat with a foot on the pedal.

This crash was 100% preventable.

Our daughter Erica died 2 days later from a severe brain injury.

That single phone call at 3:38 p.m. took my daughter's life. She should be celebrating her 23rd birthday this August. I have watched my other two daughters grow up without their sister. We have celebrated holidays and enjoyed family gatherings without Erica. The loss of her life impacted our family, our neighborhood, and our community.

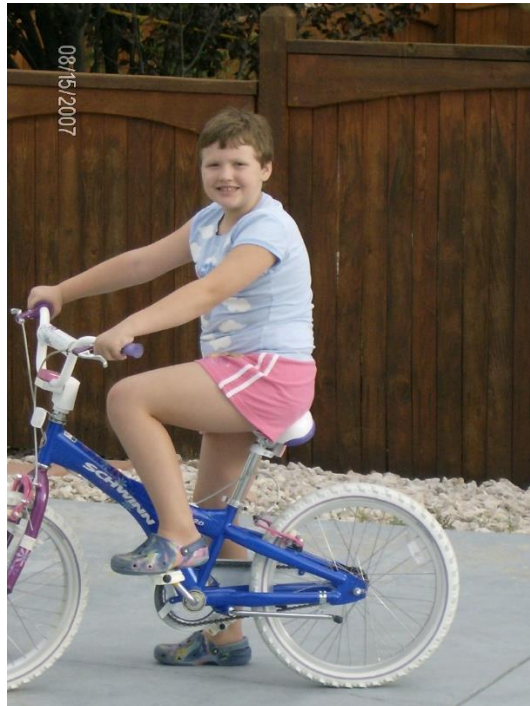
No one ever thinks it can happen to them. We did not think it could happen to us less than half a block from our home. But it did. And it is happening more and more.

Losing my daughter was a starting point for my advocacy and outreach to educate drivers about this deadly addiction of cell phone use and driving. In 2009 I joined other victim advocates and became a founding board member that launched a non-profit organization called Focus Driven Advocates for Cell Free Driving. Today I give speeches on the dangers of this uncontrolled epidemic. But I can only give so many speeches – it will take much more.

Education is good, but enforcement to stop behaviors must come with it. I need your help and support to do that. I sincerely and whole-heartedly ask for your support for SB-175.

Shelley Forney
Mother of Erica Forney
Fort Collins, CO

My daughter had a beautiful smile and a beautiful life.



May 2, 2022

The Honorable Tony Exum, Sr.
200 E Colfax
Room 307
Denver, CO 80203

The Honorable Meg Froelich
200 E Colfax
Room 307
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Chair Exum and Vice Chair Froelich:

The National Safety Council (NSC) encourages you to support SB 175, which would ban the handheld use of mobile devices while driving. NSC works 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 including over 110 in Colorado.

In 2021 alone, preliminary estimates show Colorado lost 687 lives in motor vehicle crashes, a 14% increase from the number of lives lost in 2020.¹ Nationwide, estimates showed a significant increase in motor vehicle-related fatalities again in 2021.² These data reinforce the need 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, nearly a quarter of drivers reported sending a text or email on a hand-held phone while driving at least once in the past 30 days, nearly 40% reported talking on a handheld cellphone while driving in the past month and almost 35% said they read on their hand-held phone 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

¹ https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vQ79t8M54jh1klnj4G4S8e-o8JmyNow5_iRUdDueKW9YkyA6QLhAT0Gu4sTp-IVCaMISP5YqZ9uRhL/pubhtml

² Ibid

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

⁴ <https://aaafoundation.org/2020-traffic-safety-culture-index/>

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

Adopting a ban on all handheld use of mobile devices while driving will address the need for stronger distracted driving laws and enforcement in Colorado. 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.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lorraine Martin".

Lorraine Martin
President and CEO

cc: Members of House Transportation & Local Government Committee, House Appropriations Committee