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Sep 27 2010

Do not drive and dial! Alvin Wolff heads up cell phone ban legislation in Missouri

Posted by Matthew B. Poposky at 2:07 pm

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Roughly one in four auto accidents involve the usage of a cellular phone. Despite this figure, drivers continue to hold long, drawn-out conversations whilst driving. Two obvious questions arise from these facts: why do drivers continue using their phones while driving and what can be done to remedy this situation?



Texting while driving contributes to 8-13% of road crashes.

"I believe there are eight states right now which have banned all cell phone use while driving and there are a number of others which only allow Bluetooth use by drivers," Alvin Wolff, attorney at law, Junior and Associates, said.

While Missouri has not yet reached this stage in the course of banning cell phone use for drivers, there have been several attempts to implement similar laws through the state legislature.

For instance, there have been a total of six efforts to limit, if not ban, cell phone use for drivers. Three of these focused specifically on texting.

Missouri has managed to pass one piece of legislation banning the act of texting while driving for any drivers under the age of 21.

"I suppose the reason for minor-specific driving and texting laws is that minors may not be as familiar or skilled at driving as adults," Wolff said. "However, with how dexterous kids are today, that may not be the issue. Everybody is distracted from the road if their eyes are on something else though, such as a cell phone, and most people do look at their cell phones while texting."

Students at the University of Missouri-St. Louis had their own comments regarding the concept of using a cell phone whilst driving.

"I use my phone while driving quite frequently. If I felt I was endangering anybody by driving, I wouldn't do it. I wouldn't use my phone if it took away from my concentration," Meghan Gardner, senior, business administration, said.

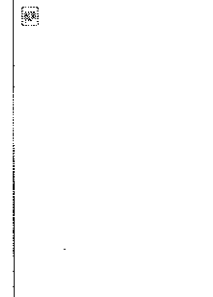
According to Gardner, the statistics of one in four accidents are not surprising.

"There have been several times others, using their phones while driving, hit my car," Gardner said. "You have to be able to multitask."

Other students have also experienced accidents due to cell phone use.

"I use my phone while driving pretty frequently. I've gotten in one car accident due to this, although it was only a rear-end. I stopped using my phone nearly as much after that," Devan Endejan, freshman, undeclared, said.

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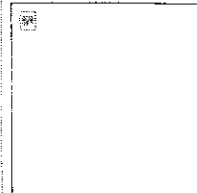
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If drivers are going to use their cell phones despite being in the driver's seat, how is Missouri to create legislation, much less enforce it? Should drivers be taking more responsibility for themselves to designate when cell phone use during driving is or is not safe?

"I think that tickets should be given out for using a phone while driving. If I get caught, I get caught. It is dangerous. That's why I cut back," Endejan said.

Gardner's view upon the subject differed from Endejan's.

"I don't really think there's a way to tell who's capable and who isn't. I don't think age has anything to do with it," Gardner said.

Whether one uses his or her phone while driving, or believes in the "no phone zone" magnets, which have been gaining prevalence since Oprah's rapid involvement in this campaign, the statistics do not lie.

"Don't Drive and Dial is a Facebook website for people to check out. It's a group of folks who are committed to not being on their cell phone whilst driving," Wolff said.

Anybody interested in helping the cause may want to start by pledging their own phone to silence while driving and then may want to get in touch with a group such as Wolff's.

Features

One Response to "Do not drive and dial! Alvin Wolff heads up cell phone ban legislation in Missouri"

Comments (1)

1. Robert M says:
September 27, 2010 at 6:08 pm
I am against this legislation for the simple fact that it infringes on personal liberty and, like a large part of legislation today, starts on the premise of "You are too stupid to do the right thing, let the government make your choices for you because they know best"
I am sure the main argument for this bill will involve the argument that "texting while driving endangers the public at large", which is true. But so does unplanned pregnancy and STDs. In fact, I would posit that unplanned pregnancies and stds have a much larger public safety impact than cell phone use while driving.
Under the guise of "we know what is best and are acting on your best interest", let's make condom use required for all sexual contact. That is but a short step past banning cell phone use while driving. Historically some of the most heinous atrocities were committed under the banner of "we know what is best and are acting on your best interest", namely most genocides. THAT is why banning ANY action less than criminal should be avoided at all costs. The slope is just too slippery to step on, and catastrophe awaits at the bottom.

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