



To: Senate Transportation Committee
From: Travis Lowe
AAA Kansas
Date: January 25, 2022
Re: Support of SB 332

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer remarks in support of SB 332.

I am Travis Lowe appearing on behalf of AAA Kansas. Since AAA's founding in 1902, the not-for-profit, fully tax-paying organization has been a leader and advocate for the safety and security of all travelers. AAA proudly serves over 350,000 Kansans. On behalf of AAA, we would like to thank you for the opportunity to offer support for legislation that will improve road safety for auto drivers as well as those maintaining Kansas roads.

SB 332 is a "Limited Hands-Free Bill" that applies to the most inexperienced drivers and areas with vulnerable bystanders at risk. The bill would prohibit the handheld use of a cell phone for drivers under the age of 18 when they are on Kansas roads, plus all drivers who drive through a road construction zone or school zone during designated hours. SB 332 does not ban the use of cell phones or other technology to be used in the vehicle.

For drivers under the age of 18, this would apply anytime while driving on a Kansas road. This restriction is already in law for drivers with a graduated driver's license.

To ensure clarity for the situations when this bill would pertain to all drivers, this would only apply in two scenarios.

- The first scenario is while driving in a school zone during designated hours. This would only apply during posted designated hours, which often are accompanied by flashing lights. Such designated hours are usually when students are expected to arrive or leave school. This would not apply to college campuses or early childhood education, only K through 12 schools. The bill also stipulates this does not apply to vehicles parked in the zone while waiting for kids to arrive.
- The second scenario is driving in a road construction zone, which are marked on roads when drivers enter or exit the zones with orange signs. Road construction zones generally see hazardous conditions, including temporary re-routing of driving lanes, uneven lanes, concrete barriers, nearby machinery and most importantly, workers by the

side of the road. We will note, however, after discussion over the last year, AAA is prepared to suggest an amendment stipulating the road construction language will only apply when workers are present.

SB 332 reflects the same language as 2021's SB 25, as it was recommended by the Senate Transportation Committee.

AAA Kansas believes there is a strong need for this legislation. According to Kansas Department of Transportation statistics, the state averages 15,000 crashes due to distracted driving each year, thus about 1 in 4 crashes are attributed to inattention. Moreover, we are saddened to learn the reports of two MODOT workers killed while working alongside the road in the last year. This bill is a step in the right direction to help reduce distracted driving and protect bystanders on Kansas roads.

AAA Kansas is joined by many stakeholders that worked together over the last year to find a pragmatic approach to address distracted driving.

The majority of states have laws restricting the handheld use by drivers under the age of 18. The bill does not supersede a local government that has more stringent laws, but it will create a minimum threshold across the state.

SB 332 does not restrict the use of emerging vehicle technology and it provides for exemptions for making emergency calls and using two-way radios.

In an effort to ensure there is adequate time to educate the public, the bill provides for law enforcement to issue warnings for the rest of this year through January 1, 2023.

We respectfully urge your support of the bill. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on this matter and I am happy to answer questions at the appropriate time.

Respectfully,

Travis Lowe

For questions, please contact:

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