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Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 459

Chairman and Members of the Senate Transportation committee, thank you for this opportunity to share my perspective with you this morning.

Distracted driving is one of those impacts in life that affects us all equally from that regardless of whether I drove my car and parked in the statehouse parking garage, or I road the bus to 8th and Van Buren and then crossed 8th Street, or whether I road my bike and parked my bike at the bike racks to the East by 9th and Jackson or finally I took an Uber and Lyft to 10th and Jackson and crossed 10th Street to get here, all of these options offer an opportunity to be touched by distracted driving. There is no isolation from the figurative and literal impacts of distracted driving.

I think Senate Bill 459 does a good job of clarifying the concerns towards ambiguity that previous proposed language in this safety realm has had an issue with. In addition, this bill builds on existing Kansas Statutes and defines how we all recognize cell phone use, in particular while driving, is a danger to all road users.

As a driver and road user I am not perfect, and like others I have to remind myself that I can wait until I reach my destination to answer that text vibration I just felt. It's important to put language into statute to help codify that, as a state, Kansas values human life when it comes to moving vehicles. Kansas values the people, no matter what the vehicle type they're transported by and our people are the element worth protecting through solid policy. Senate Bill 459 aims to narrow that focus of what's an inappropriate behavior while driving, for all those involved.

The Kansas Legislative Research Department provides, in its 2020 Briefing Book, that in 2017, a total of 15,627 crashes involved distracted drivers, with total costs of those crashes estimated at \$774.5 million. That's money out of Kansan's pockets and municipal coffers being transferred into emergency response crews, repairs, losses and medical bills that didn't otherwise have to be paid if distracted driving weren't an issue. And legislation to work on that is only a point of a multipronged approach including education, road and car design.

Further, KLRD's review of distracted driving laws states that "a 2014 review of studies published since 2009 found "all-driver bans on hand-held phone conversations have resulted in long-term

reductions in hand-held phone use, and drivers in ban states reported higher rates of hands-free phone use and lower overall phone use compared with drivers in non-ban states.”

I ask you to think of the person or persons in your family or life, because I know we've all had at least one person around us affected negatively because of a distraction over the last few years and consider moving Senate Bill 459 forward in an effort to improve the safety of Kansas roads.

Thank you!