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1988-2009

The Casey Feldman Foundation
EndDD.org

Testimony of Joel D Feldman, Esq., MS in Support of Maryland HB 1082, February 25, 2021

Summary

HB 1082 will aid in the detection and prosecution of distracted drivers. The deterrent effect of visible and consistent enforcement of distracted driving laws will reduce crashes and injuries and save lives, particularly the lives of our children who are most affected by distracted driving. Presently, fewer 16-18-year-olds believe they will get caught texting and driving than any other age group. HB 1082 will change that perception and reduce teen distracted driving. HB 1082 should be passed because it will keep our children safer on our roadways and reduce the number of families mourning the loss of a child, sibling, or other family member.

Distracted driving is pervasive and despite numerous campaigns, reductions in crashes, injuries and fatalities are not as significant as we would like. For our children, the most inexperienced of drivers, distracted driving has had a disproportionately adverse impact.

Teens are involved in distraction-affected crashes at 3 times the rate of any other age group.¹ More than 50% of serious teen crashes are caused by distraction.² Among drivers involved in fatal crashes, drivers 15-19 were more likely to be involved than any other age group.³ Distraction and driver inexperience is a terrible and terrifying combination. More than 70% of teens say that their moms and dads frequently drive distracted. As parents we have in large part abdicated our responsibility to model safe driving behaviors for our children.

Although we tell our children not to drive distracted, our hypocrisy sends a completely different message. How effective do we think that our critical safety message to our children to not drive distracted will be if that message is tainted with hypocrisy? If a child grows up in a household where a parent drives distracted that child is between 2-3 times more likely to drive distracted.

Fewer 16-18-year-olds believe that texting or e-mailing on cell phones while driving is very, or extremely dangerous, than any other age group. Additionally, fewer 16-18-year-olds perceive they are likely to get caught by police texting or e-mailing while driving (39.7%), than 19-24-year-olds (46%) and 25-39-year-

¹ NHTSA. Traffic Safety Facts, 2018. <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/812926>

² AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Distraction and Teen Crashes: Even Worse Than We Thought, 2015. <https://newsroom.aaa.com/2015/03/distraction-teen-crashes-even-worse-thought/>

³ CDC Transportation Safety, Distracted Driving, 2019. https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/distracted_driving/index.html

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