

AAA Supports Bill That Would Ban Using A Phone While Driving

By Administrator

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AAA Carolinas supports proposed legislation in North Carolina that would make it illegal to use hand-held communication devices, such as cell phones, behind the wheel while driving.

Rep. Kevin Corbin (R- Macon) filed HB 144, titled “Hands Free NC,” in the House today, in response to mounting traffic fatalities caused by distracted driving. Reps. John Torbett (R-Gaston), Jon Hardister (R-Guilford) and Garland Pierce (D-Scotland) are also sponsoring the bill.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety has conducted research that revealed distracted driving, especially cell phone use, can be just as dangerous, or even worse than drunk driving.

“If participating in dangerous behaviors such as texting on a hand-held device while driving is equivalent to drunk driving, why would those actions remain legal behind the wheel?” said Dave Parsons, AAA Carolinas President and CEO. “We support this proposed legislation and urge lawmakers to pass this bill to combat the distracted driving epidemic in an effort to save lives and make our roads safer for everyone.”

According to NCDOT, in 2018 there were 123 fatalities coded as a result of distracted driving. However, AAA Carolinas believes the numbers are higher because the behavior is difficult to prove and motorists won’t readily admit to doing it. Last year, there were also 102 rear end fatal crashes and 733 lane departure fatalities. Rear end and lane departure collisions are a common result from distracted driving.

Since texting while driving is difficult to prove, the Hands Free NC bill will give law enforcement the ability to stop drivers simply for holding their phone, whereas in the past they would have to have a secondary reason like speeding or not wearing a seat belt.

The bill carries a \$100 fine for the first offense, \$150 fine and insurance points for the second and \$200 and insurance points for the third.

“We’d love to see all of the Carolinas become hands-free and are pleased that lawmakers in both states are considering this type of life-saving legislation,” added Parsons.