

4 Reasons Why

Now is the time for a hands-free law

Missouri has some of the most lenient laws related to distracted driving. There are a host of reasons to strengthen our texting law or to implement a hands-free measure, but here are some of the strongest arguments for taking action to address this deadly issue to save more Missourians' lives.

1

The **human toll of distracted driving** crashes is unimaginable. Thousands of crashes in Missouri involve distracted driving every year, and 407 people have died in the last five years. They are mothers and fathers, babies, grandparents and teens. Among them, 34-year-old Randall Siddens of Columbia was killed by a driver using FaceTime. Now his wife, Adrienne, must raise their three young children by herself.

2

Missouri is **one of just two states** in the nation without an all-driver texting ban. Current law only prohibits drivers 21 and under from texting, yet about 70 percent of cell phone-related crashes in the state involve drivers who are 22 or older. In all, 48 states acknowledge that texting behind the wheel is dangerous and have taken action, but Missouri is not among them.

3

States that have implemented hands-free laws have seen a **decline in fatality rates**. In fact, 12 out of 15 states and the District of Columbia experienced an average decrease of 15.3 percent in traffic deaths within two years after their hands-free laws passed. While hands-free is not risk-free, these laws make it easier for officers to enforce distracted driving laws.

4

According to the Federal Highway Administration, each fatal Missouri crash caused by distracted driving results in **\$9.9 million in comprehensive costs**, including \$1.5 million in economic costs like emergency services, legal costs, property damage, and lost wages and benefits. The balance includes quality-of-life costs quantified by estimating the value that people put on their lives.

