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**Testimony presented to the
Senate Transportation Committee
House Bill 2499
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Chairman Petersen and members of the Senate Transportation Committee, Safe Kids Kansas is pleased to provide testimony in support of HB 2499. Safe Kids Kansas is a nonprofit coalition of partnering agencies, organizations and businesses, whose mission is to prevent unintentional injuries and injury-related death to Kansas children.

Summary of Issue and Position:

As injury prevention specialists and safety advocates, we know that driving a vehicle weighing two or more tons on our roadways is a serious responsibility. The driver must process hundreds of tiny decisions each mile driven and manage numerous distractions that take place in our vehicle. In the matter of just a moment, the driver's attention may be pulled away putting lives at risk. According to the Centers for Disease Control, younger, inexperienced drivers have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes. Their lack of driving experience can contribute to misjudgments if they become distracted. While mobile phones pose a distraction hazard for drivers of all ages, we support this proposal to ban handheld use of phones for those drivers under the age of 18, and all drivers in high-risk environments such as construction zones and school zones, as a step toward safer roads for all.

Data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), show distracted driving claimed 3,522 lives in the U.S. in 2021 alone. In addition, a 2021 National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS) conducted by NHTSA found that 2.5% of drivers stopped at intersections were talking on hand-held phones at any moment during the day. Combining this observational data with self-reported data on hand-held and hands-free phone use, the federal government estimates that 7.6% of drivers were using a hand-held or hands-free cellphone during any moment of the day. In the same survey, 3.4% of drivers were observed manipulating hand-held devices or infotainment systems. The rate was highest, at 5.4%, for drivers estimated to be 16-24 years old. As drivers, it is our responsibility to take caution and be aware of our surroundings, or else it can result in serious or fatal consequences.

Safe Kids Kansas supports HB 2499 and reasonable penalties to reduce risks associated with handheld phone use to keep all individuals safer on our roads, especially in high-risk areas such as construction zones and school zones.

*The majority of states in the U.S. have laws restricting the handheld use of phones for drivers under the age of 18. Neighboring state laws include the following:

Colorado – Bans all cellphone use for drivers under the age of 18.

Oklahoma – Bans handheld use for novice drivers and school bus and transit bus drivers.

Nebraska – Bans handheld use for novice drivers and school bus drivers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Attachments: Safe Kids Kansas Member Organizations





Safe Kids Kansas Member Organizations

- AAA Kansas
- American Academy of Pediatrics – Kansas Chapter
- Brain Injury Association of Kansas
- Charlie’s House
- Children’s Mercy Hospital
- Child Care Aware of Kansas
- Dillon’s Stores
- Eye Care Council
- Fire Education Association of Kansas (FEAK)
- Huggable Images
- Kansas Academy of Family Physicians
- Kansas Alliance of YMCAs
- Kansas Association for Justice
- Kansas Association of Counties
- Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD)
- Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine
- Kansas Association of School Boards (KASB)
- Kansas Board of Emergency Medical Services
- Kansas Children’s Cabinet & Trust Fund
- Kansas Chiropractic Association
- Kansas Cooperative Extension 4-H
- Kansas Dental Association
- Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF)
- Kansas Department of Health & Environment (KDHE):
 - Bureau of Health Promotion
 - Bureau of Family Health
 - Childhood Lead Poison Prevention Program
 - Trauma Program
 - EMS for Children (EMSC)
- Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL)
- Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)
- Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP)
- Kansas Emergency Nurses Association (KENA)
- Kansas Healthy Start Home Visitor Services
- Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP)
- Kansas Hospital Association (KHA)
- Kansas Insurance Department
- Kansas Medical Society (KMS)
- Kansas Motor Carriers Association (KMCA)
- Kansas National Education Association (KNEA)
- Kansas Operation Lifesaver
- Kansas Parent Teachers Association (Kansas PTA)
- Kansas Poison Center
- Kansas Public Health Association (KPHA)
- Kansas School Nurses Organization (KSNO)
- Kansas State Association of Fire Chiefs
- Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)
- Kansas State Child Death Review Board
- Kansas State Firefighters Association
- Kansas State Nurses Association
- Kansas Traffic Safety Resource Office (KTSRO)
- KIDS Network
- Kids and Car Safety (formerly KidsAndCars.org)
- University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC):
 - Burn Center
 - Emergency Services
 - Trauma Services
- National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) Regional Office
- Office of the Governor – Constituent Services
- Office of the State Fire Marshal
- Safety & Health Council of Western MO & KS
- Salina Educational Automotive Museum of America (dba The Garage)
- State Capitol Area Fire Fighters Association
- State Farm Insurance Companies
- Stormont-Vail Health
- United School Administrators of Kansas
- Ascension Via Christi
 - St. Francis Burn Center
 - Trauma Center
- Wesley Medical Center
- YMCA of Topeka

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