

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**REGARDING SENATE BILL 99
RELATING TO HANDS FREE DRIVING**

February 8, 2017

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members:

The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) is providing written testimony in support of Senate Bill 99, hands free driving. This proposed legislation provides clarity to the current anti-texting statute 8-15, 111.

The act of driving requires your full attention. Any action that takes your hands off the wheel, eyes off the road and interrupts your train of thought is distracted driving. The ever increasing number of electronic distractions in the vehicle has led to more drivers that are operating a vehicle while distracted. Reading or sending one text message or email while driving is similar to driving blindfolded for the entire length of a football field.

According to KDOT crash statistics, in Kansas, from 2009 to 2014, an average of 92 persons have lost their lives due to distracted driving. That equates to about one in four fatalities are attributed to distracted driving. During this same period, the state has averaged 15,000 distracted driving crashes. This translates to 25 percent of all crashes list distracted driving as a contributing circumstance.

Education plays an important role in reducing death and injury on Kansas roads. Enhancements to the current statute should make it easier to educate, explain and understand the importance of not driving distracted.