



MINNESOTANS FOR SAFE DRIVING

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March 20, 2023

Chair Rep. Frank Hornstein
Members of the House Transportation Committee

Re: House File 2361

The main goal of Minnesotans for Safe Driving (MSD) is to assist victims of traffic crashes, educate the public to the dangers of all unsafe driving behaviors and work with other groups and government entities to reduce the carnage on our roadways. Unfortunately, after many years of steady decline in the numbers of traffic deaths and injuries, these numbers are moving in the wrong direction. Our state and nation must again put a priority on saving lives on our roadways.

This committee, Transportation, will be addressing the funding of a new Advisory Council for Traffic Safety. MSD is very supportive of this Council and believe it will bring an important group of people and agencies together to prioritize ways to stop this uptick of fatalities that have happened over these last 2 years and reverse back to the goal of "Toward Zero Deaths" with a steady decline in the numbers.

Included in this bill is an important clarification for the **Hands- Free Bill** that was passed in 2017. Using your phone while driving no matter how the phone is used is very distracting and dangerous. Unfortunately, prosecutors found that listing, in the law, all the different ways using a phone was illegal, the judiciary said that law enforcement then must prove which of those actions the driver was doing at the time of the stop. This was almost impossible to prove. The new language in this bill will clarify that holding the phone with either one hand or both hands will be in itself illegal. It is so important that all drivers *just drive* and only pay attention to the road.

Please vote yes on this important bill for highway safety.

Nancy Johnson
Legislative Liaison Minnesotans for Safe Driving