



PROBLEM:

- ✘ Last year, **Florida ranked 43rd out of 50** states for its driving fatality rate at 1.52 [this is the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled].
- ✘ Nearly **10 people per day are killed** in vehicle crashes in Florida (3331 in 2023)
- ✘ Florida has some of the laxest distracted driving and hands-free cellphone laws in the country:
 - Florida's distracted driving laws are weaker than all six states with higher driving fatality rates;
 - States like Arizona and Tennessee, which are among the states with higher fatality rates — recently strengthened hands-free laws in response to the growing fatality crisis on their roads.
- ✘ Hillsborough County has the highest traffic fatality rate in America with 67.6 deaths per 100,000 residents.
- ✘ Polling indicates overwhelmingly that citizens want stricter hands-free laws
 - 97% of people support a ban on texting and driving and current Florida law does not even do that.
 - 86% of drivers support hands-free legislation
- ✘ In the 2024 Legislative Session, the state senate failed to act despite overwhelming support in the House of Representative for Hands-Free legislation.
- ✘ Florida is the largest state that hasn't passed comprehensive hands-free laws.

RESOLUTION:

- ✓ A common-sense solution must address the actual problem: getting phones out of people's hands. That's what Hands-Free legislation does.
- ✓ A solution must be enforceable. Hands-Free laws make a clear distinction that is easy for law enforcement to understand and enforce.
- ✓ Penalties must be steep enough to dissuade drivers from using hand-held devices while driving.
- ✓ Hands-Free laws have seen a measurable and immediate reduction in traffic fatalities in states where they have been enforced with meaningful penalties.
- ✓ **31 other states have passed hands-free measures and as a result have REDUCED TRAFFIC DEATHS BY 10-25%.**
- ✓ Oregon and Georgia have among the strictest hands-free laws and data correlates a reduced level of driver distractions (see facts and figures for specific data).
- ✓ This resolution will show a commitment by county commissions to their constituents' lives and safety.
- ✓ Hands-free laws are not like seatbelt laws; rather, they are more akin to drunk driving because they not only affect the driver's safety, they affect everyone who happens to cross their paths.
- ✓ NHTSA has begun using models identical to drunk driving to fully grasp the extent of distracted driving because they are comparable. Using models similar to those applied to impaired driving, NHTSA estimates that nearly 30% of crashes are due to distraction. Using that model, researchers project that distracted driving caused 12,581 preventable deaths in 2021.

YOUR ROLE:

County Commissions are closer to their constituency and the preventable tragedies occurring in your communities. Please urge the legislature to pass a comprehensive hands-free law. Show them your commitment to the lives of Floridians and visitors alike, but also to the lives of your community, friends and family.

Pass this resolution in your county.