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Senate President Kevin Meyer Senate District M

SB 123: Use of Electronic Devices While Driving Version E

SB 123 changes the penalty for driving while texting from a class A misdemeanor to a violation of up to \$500, unless the action causes physical injury or death to another person. The more severe felony penalties for those offenses will remain unchanged. The reduction in penalty is intended to make prosecution of distracted drivers more expedient, in that law enforcement officers will be able to issue tickets immediately, rather than prosecute the individual through the court system. In addition, the legislation directs the Courts to add the violation to the bail schedule, and establishes an effective date. No other aspect of current law as summarized below is changed by this legislation.

Except for emergency vehicles, operating an electronic screen device while driving is illegal when:

1. The vehicle is moving
2. The vehicle has a television, video monitor, or portable computer in full view of the driver and the monitor or visual display is operating while the person is driving

Exceptions to the law are:

1. Using cell phones or tablets for verbal communication or displaying caller ID
2. Using equipment that is displaying information such as audio/stereo, GPS and navigation devices, vehicle operation information, video equipment showing reversing/maneuvering (driving) operation
3. Utilizing vehicle dispatching and response information for emergency roadside assistance and passenger or freight package delivery
4. Using information being displayed to perform highway construction, maintenance, or repair or data acquisition by DOT/PF or a municipality
5. Emergency vehicles (police, fire or emergency medical service) are exempt from these prohibitions

I respectfully request your support on SB 123.