

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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## **Representative Berta Gardner**

*House District 24*

February 24, 2011

### SPONSOR STATEMENT

#### House Bill 128

*"An Act relating to prohibiting the use of cellular telephones by minors when driving a motor vehicle; and providing for an effective date."*

Our automobile insurance rates illustrate the well-established fact that younger and less experience drivers have more vehicle accidents than older drivers. Today, a growing body of evidence shows that use of cell phones increases risk of accident for all drivers, but especially for younger ones.

Each year, Alaska sees an increase in the number of motor vehicle accidents involving the use of cellular phones by drivers. Between 2002 and 2008 there were 399 traffic accidents involving cell phones in Alaska. The largest group, about 36 percent, involved drivers between 16 and 20 years old, although they make up only about 7.4% of Alaskan drivers.

Additionally, people between 16 and 24 are the most frequent cell phone users.

Other statistics show:

- 16 and 17 year old drivers have the highest fatality rate in car crashes.
- Motor vehicle crashes are number 1 cause of death among teenagers.
- Motor vehicle crashes are the number 2 cause of injuries requiring hospitalization among 15 to 24 year olds in Alaska.
- The under-20 age group has the greatest proportion of distracted drivers involved in fatal crashes.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has gathered data that nearly 25% of all vehicle accidents directly involve the use of cell phones. By limiting a minor's use of a cell phone while driving, we can make our roads safer for everyone.

Please join me in supporting House Bill 128 to make our roads safer.