



March 16, 2018

Honorable Senator Jim Beall
Chair, Senate Transportation & Housing Committee
Room 2082 State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Beall:

On behalf of all the insurance trade organizations listed above, we are writing to express our support for SB 1030, a bill that would impose a point violation against the driver's record for violating distracted driving rules. Distracted driving has become a dangerous reality on California's roadways. In fact, car crashes have now become the number one cause of death for children under the age of 18¹. This bill will put the proper weight behind the public safety laws needed to right this crisis.

According to the National Highway Transportation and Safety Administration (NHTSA) 3,450 people were killed in crashes involving a distracted driver in 2016. NHTSA has further reported that drivers visibly manipulating hand-held devices while driving increased by 250% between 2009 and 2016. The Triple AAA foundation ("foundation") for Traffic Safety found that "*mental distraction can last up to 27 seconds*" after using voice commands on cars or while sending a text. To put this in context, a vehicle moving at 55 mph on the freeway moves the length of an entire football field in only five seconds².

Despite these harrowing statistics, current penalties for distracted driving have not necessarily been a sufficient deterrent or have been effective in changing distracted driving behaviors as we routinely see drivers who text, watch video, take selfies, and many other unsafe behaviors on the road today. Additionally, the increasing popularity of "infotainment apps" have provided even greater distractions for drivers, such as shopping, news, and sports access. While these apps offer many advantages to society, it is undeniable that they have exacerbated the distracted driving crisis.

Given the high number of distracted driving related accidents, current law is clearly not enough of a deterrent. Studies have shown that along with primary enforcement of seatbelt laws when coupled with an increase in penalties have led to an increase in seatbelt usage³. Here, we believe the same rationale applies in that imposing a point violation for distracted drivers could indeed minimize such behaviors. To date, we are aware of 14 other states that currently impose point violation for distracted driving.

SB 1030 will strengthen distracted driving laws and curb the dangerous distracted driving behaviors that currently endanger all Californians. We, therefore, urge your "aye" vote on SB 1030. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact any of the following: Armand Feliciano, PCI Vice President (916-205-2519/armand.feliciano@acicnet.org); Michael Gunning, PIFC Vice President (916-442-6646/mgunning@pifc.org); Shari McHugh, PADIC, (916-769- 4872/smchugh@mchughgr.com); and Katie Pettibone, AIA Vice President, (kpettibone@aiaadc.org, 916-402-1678).

¹ <https://www.newsday.com/news/nation/study-texting-while-driving-now-leading-cause-of-death-for-teen-drivers-1.5226036>

² <https://www.nhtsa.gov/risky-driving/distracted-driving>

³ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15389588.2013.857017>